Commentary

Volume Sixty-two, Number Five, November 1976

On Returning to Religion

William Barrett

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Elie Kedourie

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Jack Beatty / Roger Starr

Werner J. Dannhauser

Music

Schoenberg's Survival

Samuel Lipman

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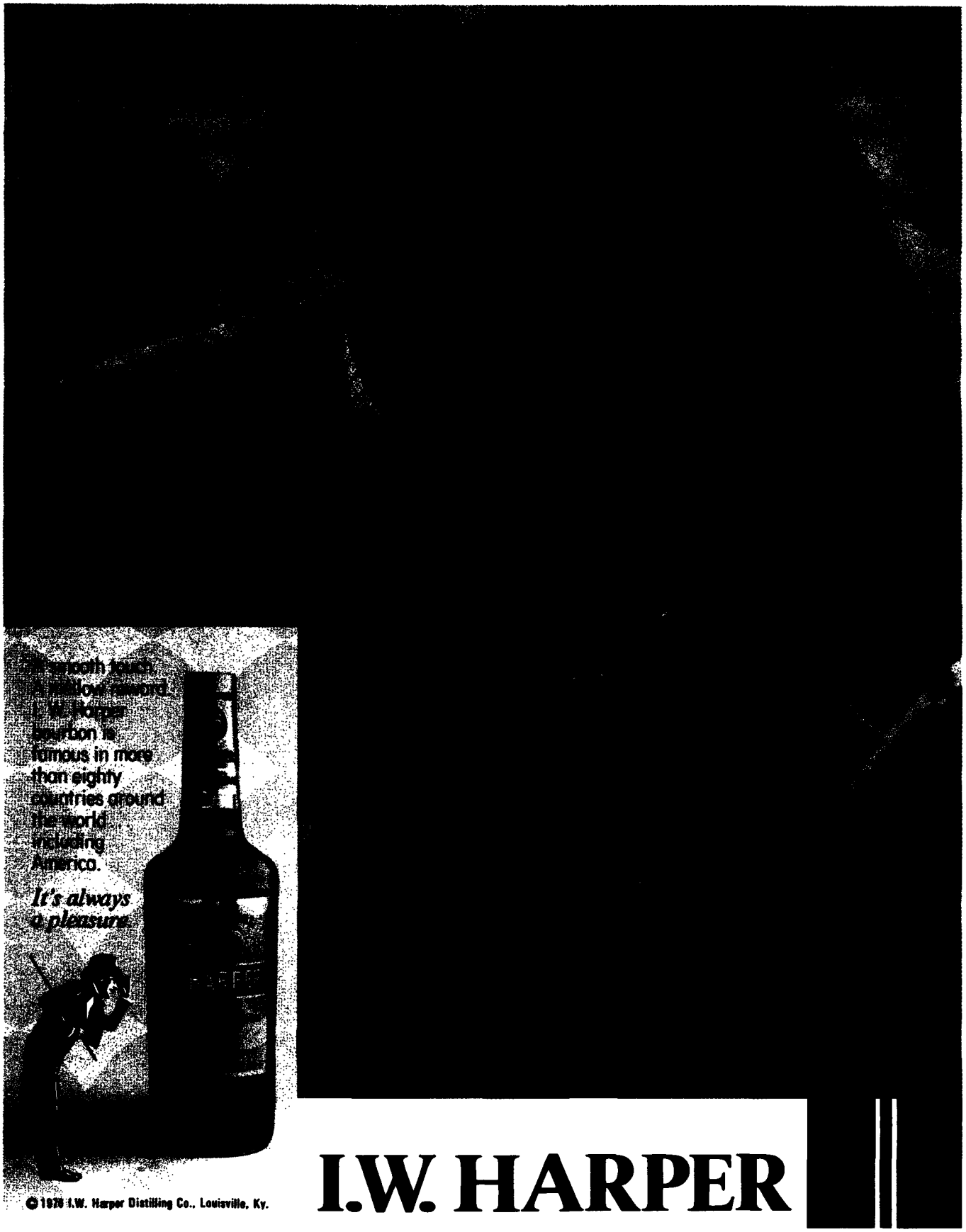

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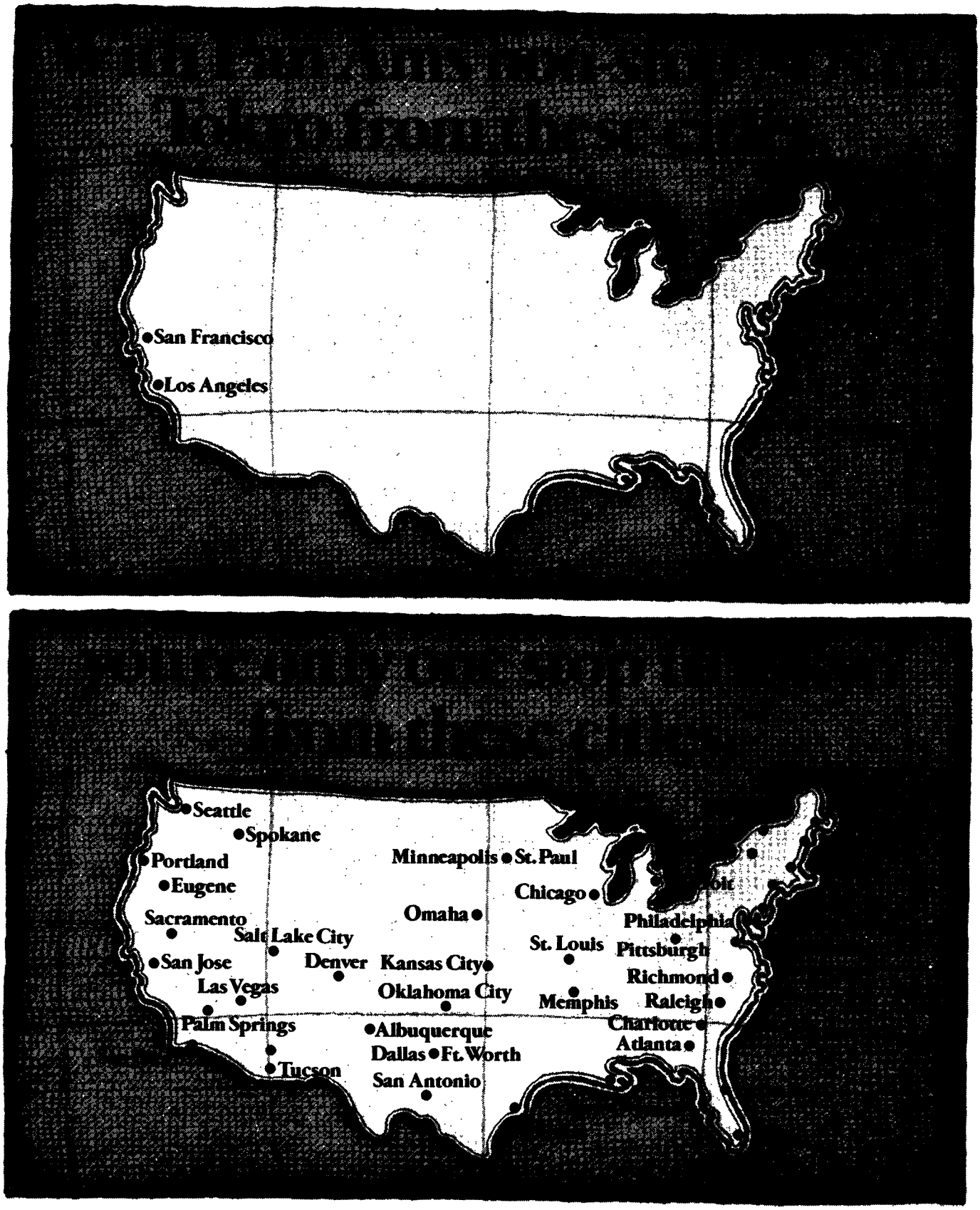

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Commentary

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A Statement of Aims

In sponsoring COMMENTARY, the American Jewish Committee aims to meet the need for a journal of significant thought and opinion on Jewish affairs and contemporary issues. Its pages will be hospitable to diverse points of view and belief, and it hopes to encourage original creative endeavor in the various fields of culture. The opinions and views expressed by COMMENTARY's contributors and editors are their own, and do not necessarily express the Committee's viewpoint or position. The sponsorship of COMMENTARY by the Committee is in line with its general program to enlighten and clarify public opinion on problems of Jewish concern, to fight bigotry and protect human rights, and to promote Jewish cultural interest and creative achievement in America.

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Letters from Readers

Israel and the United States—Cont'd

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his salutary reminder that the nations of the world apply the double standard to Israel, pressing it to accept conditions (and make concessions) which nobody would dream of demanding of any other people, Norman Podhoretz ascribes this attitude to anti-Semitism ["The Abandonment of Israel," July]. This is true enough and dangerous enough. It must, however, be added that this attitude is very often an inherited hangover from the days when we had no state. What is most significant is that the application of the double standard feeds on Jewish readiness to accept it. Regrettably, the Israeli government's acceptance of a second- or third-rate status—as, to cite one blatant example, in the case of the Suez Canal, where in contravention of the Constantinople Convention, Israeli ships are not allowed, but the recent permission by Egypt for the transit of Israeli cargoes was nevertheless hailed as a victory in Jerusalem—is not calculated to wear down this type of anti-Semitism, or even to induce in its perpetrators a sense of wrongdoing.

This pliancy is usually ascribed to the fact that the Israeli government is subject to pressures. Be that as it may, how have the articulate, influential, concerned Jewish intellectuals in the Diaspora (and specifically the United States) behaved? Integrated in Western culture as they are, many of them bearing its message and its burdens, alert to Israel's special significance as a nation and a state, to its unique experience, to its unique danger, and to its down-to-earth rights as a member of the family of nations in the second half of the 20th century, what have *they* done to insure equal treatment for Israel? How have they reacted in the face of the phenomena referred to by Theodore Draper and the Rev. Douglas Young—both cited by Mr. Podhoretz—and by Mr. Podhoretz himself? If we recall especially the tense, fear-filled weeks that preceded the Six-Day War when the fulfillment of the Arab threat to annihilate Israel seemed imminent, and the ordeal and the agony that then gripped the Jewish Diaspora, how is it that these articulate people-who-care, when the danger had been repelled and they could breathe again, did not speak up in American society, to their government and their media and, with all the force of persuasion, the passion of a just cause, and the authority of a common American experience and culture, insist that they *stop* demanding of Israel unjust, humiliating, dangerous, and unique concessions? Should they not moreover have fought tooth and nail to educate their legislators and their publicists on the dangers for the *United States*—and the West in general—of a Munich-type policy toward Israel?

And should they not have applied themselves to sharpening the awareness of the Israeli government and people as to the truths now so eloquently spelled out in Mr. Podhoretz's article, urging them to stand firm against pressures, against accepting the equation of "territories for peace" which they knew to be spurious, which they knew could be suicidal?

Some no doubt did try. Most of those with access to the corridors of influence did not. Was it inherent psychological weakness, "Jewish" accommodation to less and to worse; or was it the mere uncritical belief that submissive Israeli postures had freed them from the inconvenient obligation of possible friction with the American establishment?

They were under no pressure from the State Department. Yet they welcomed and encouraged the notion that black was white, and found themselves espousing, implicitly or explicitly, the theme that in fact the Arabs (or more usually, this or that Arab leader) "wanted peace"—that in fact all that was needed for peace was Israeli concession of territory. They pretended they did not know (or could they possibly really not have known?) that unless you accepted the legitimacy of Israel's ceasing to exist this was a lie. It was certainly cozier for them not to have to take the American establishment to task for treating the Jews in their own state as a second- or third-class people so accustomed to discrimination that it could also get used to life-or-death wars every few years which must inevitably result in retreat to frontiers temptingly vulnerable to the Arabs.

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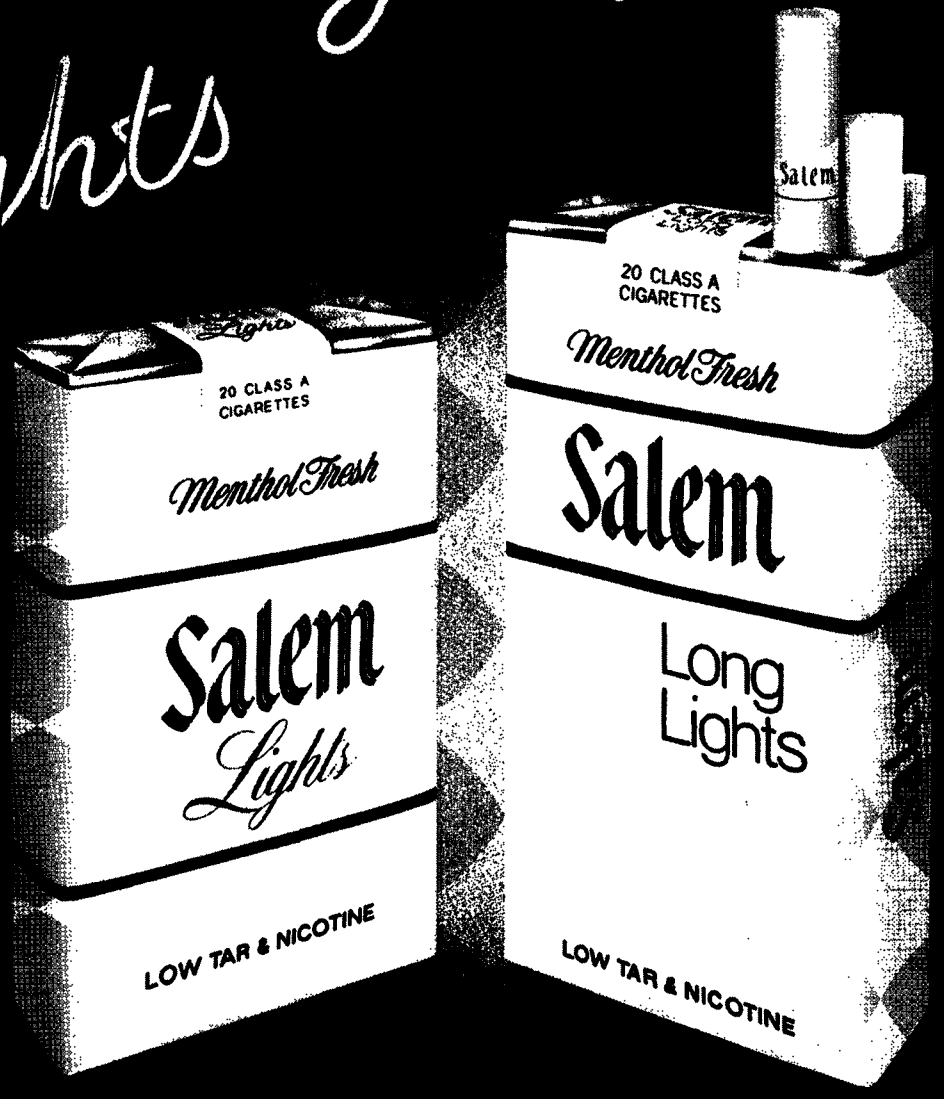

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They thus contributed—unthinkingly—to the shows of propaganda (lyrics by Arabs, music by State Department, Whitehall, Quai d'Orsay, oil companies, Moscow, *et al.*) designed to make people forget that the sole cause of the conflict in Palestine is the refusal of the Arabs to tolerate any Jewish state and, since it came into existence, their efforts to annihilate it; and that history, and the absence of peace, did not begin with an "Israeli occupation" in 1967.

The free American Jewish intellectual should have been the first instinctively to take the offensive, and to urge the Israelis boldly to do the same, in proclaiming the truth: "Of course, Israel is 'intransigent.' After our experience since 1947, who would not be? We know moreover that only our intransigence, our determination not to be deceived for the fourth time into giving up territory, holds out the hope that one day the Arabs, finding they have no prospect of achieving their lethal purpose, will turn their minds from their imperialist greed for territory and toward a search for peace."

This is surely the logic, the thrust, and the message of Mr. Podhoretz's powerful article. Yet in the midst of it, as though withdrawing for a moment from his bold confrontation with the cold winds of truth into the shelter of the conventional wisdom, he injects the following passage:

> The idea that it is the intransigence of the Israelis which has prevented a peaceful settlement in the Middle East is yet another stunning inversion of the truth. The only thing about which the Israelis have been intransigent is their right to live in peace as a sovereign Jewish state among their Muslim Arab neighbors. For this they have always been ready to make territorial and other concessions and still are. There is of course a small if strident minority of Israelis who wish at all costs to hold onto all the territories forever. But the polls and every other indication show that the great majority of Israelis are still willing to do whatever may be necessary to achieve a sure and lasting peace.

Thus suddenly, even if only momentarily, there is an implicit reversion to the thesis that it is the Israeli occupation of territory that prevents peace, and moreover that most Israelis accept this thesis—the thesis attacked and refuted throughout the whole of the rest of Mr. Podhoretz's article. Indeed a few lines further on he writes:

> Given the intransigent determination of the Arabs to do away with a sovereign Jewish state in their midst and given their belated discovery that the oil weapon is so potent an instrument for accomplishing this purpose, why would they stop using it after the first victory (the return of Israel to the 1967 boundaries) or even the second (the establishment of a Palestinian state on the West Bank) were won? With Israel reduced and weakened, the way would be open for a military *coup de grâce*.

Quite so. "The logic," as Mr. Podhoretz goes on to say, "is as inexorable as it is terrible." If then he assumes that a majority of Israelis believe that doing "whatever may be necessary to achieve a sure and lasting peace" means to give up territory and thus, precisely, to "reduce and weaken Israel and open the way for a military *coup de grâce*"—why does he not warn them against such soft-headedness, against this terrible blunder which will lead them not to peace but to war in such forbidding circumstances that he foresees their having to fall back on the nuclear option? Why, to top if off, does he direct words of denigration precisely at those Israelis who refuse to shut their eyes and brains to the Arab purpose, who object to a repetition of the costly blunders since 1947, who, in short, are alive to the facts and alert to the implications so cogently expounded by Mr. Podhoretz in the whole of the rest of his article?

For some unfathomable reason he refers to these Israelis as a "small if strident minority." I would be curious to see the source of his information. He appears to be hopelessly misinformed. As though in answer to Mr. Podhoretz's evaluation, there is the recently published survey by the Institute of Applied Social Science in Jerusalem carried out over a period of three years, 1973-75, among high-school students on the one hand and adults on the other.

They were asked to comment on the proposition that the more administered territory Israel returns, the more will the Arabs be prepared to make a true peace.

The results showed that 8 per cent of the students, 9 per cent of the adults, answered yes. The vast majority do *not* believe that "what has to be done" to achieve peace is to surrender territory to the Arabs.

The persistent brainwashing by the Israeli establishment to induce the people to believe that, regardless of their gut-knowledge of the Arab purpose, they will have to give in to American arm-twisting (and in spite of their experience of that arm-twisting) has not succeeded in reducing the percentage of young people opposed to the surrender of any territory at all (or very little, in the terms of the survey) below 65, or the percentage of adults below 47. It is not irrelevant at this point to add—in the light of misinformation purveyed by American newspaper correspondents—that the sampling in this survey also favors *settlement* in the territories in the following proportions (relating to the different areas): adults—between 69 and 83 per cent; students—between 75 and 88.

If the people of Israel believe they are faced with the kind of dilemma which Henry Kissinger made part of his stock-in-trade in his dealings with their government—in effect, "Either you give up territory or you'll be thrown to the wolves"—and if the Israeli government persists in the policy of submissiveness and the concomitant brainwashing of its people—the erosion of spirit may be resumed (it was stemmed by the Entebbe operation) and one day there could indeed be a cowed, resigned majority who will allow themselves to be led to the brink of catastrophe. (Mr. Podhoretz pictures Israel being "forced into a Paris-type or Munich-type agreement"—that is surely, in the spirit of Munich, to "acquiesce in whatever may be necessary to achieve a sure and lasting peace.")

But this has not yet happened. There is still enough spirit in the Israeli people not only to justify Mr. Podhoretz's forecast that after a sellout the Israelis would fight, but to stand up politically to pressures and coercion. Not the least element in such a stand is the belief that, *no less than at Munich*, a sellout is ultimately as dangerous to the seller as to the victim, that the "abandonment of Israel" would be a disaster for the West in general and for the United States in particular. Because the process of our "Munich"—which has already begun—is a more drawn-out one, it is still possible to halt it. To do so

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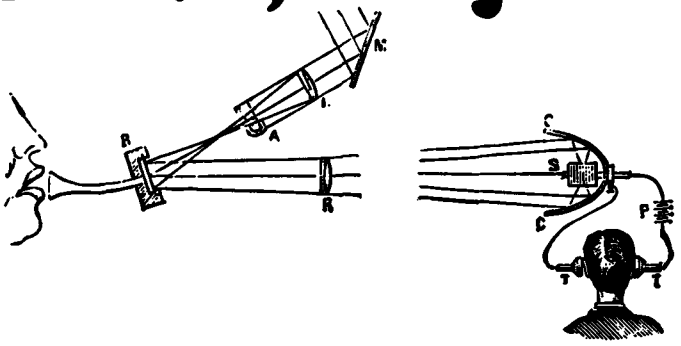
What's next, Professor Bell?



The photophone transmitted voices on a beam of light in 1880.

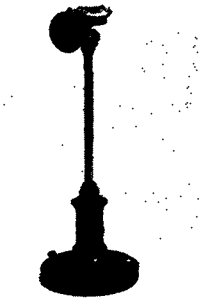
Alexander Graham Bell

"The greatest invention I have ever made; greater than the telephone." That's how Alexander Graham Bell rated his photophone, patented four years after the telephone, to transmit conversations on a beam of light. (Photophone = light-sound.) He actually demonstrated lightwave transmission of voices, but it would be nearly a century before it would become a practical reality.

The photophone was one of many ideas Bell proposed to improve the usefulness of his basic invention. Working with him on improvements were his assistants Thomas A. Watson, who received the world's first telephone call on March 10, 1876, and Charles S. Tainter. The sort of work they did would be called today "research and development".

Bell envisaged a telephone network linking the cities of the nation and eventually the whole world. But a voice could travel only a limited distance over a wire before it weakened and became inaudible. So the first phones depended heavily on lung power. It is no coincidence that we speak of telephone "calls", or that the word "hello", the standard greeting in phone conversations, is kin to "holler".

For years many people looked for a way to make a voice reach from coast to coast, including engineers of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company (the parent company of the Bell System), and its manufacturing and supply arm, the Western Electric Company. Some telephone people were much interested by a paper read to the American Institute of Electrical Engineers on October 20, 1906, by Dr. Lee de Forest. The paper described de Forest's new "audion" tube, a version of the vacuum tube used at that time in radio receiving sets. Basic theory told de Forest that his invention should detect *and amplify* tiny electric currents, such as those coming over the telephone



In 1886 this special telephone set was used for long distance calls.

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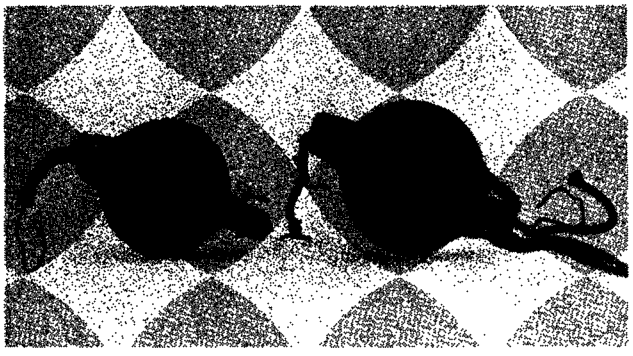
wire. But his early models failed at amplification. He continued working on his own. And telephone engineers pursued other solutions.

By 1912 de Forest was ready to demonstrate an improved audion that did operate as an amplifier, although imperfectly. In the group of telephone people assembled for one of de Forest's demonstrations was Harold D. Arnold, 29, a brilliant physicist hired the year before. Arnold identified at once the audion's major problem: the vacuum pump de Forest was using left too much air inside the tube, with the result that its performance was erratic and unpredictable. As a consequence of financial support by AT&T of the Bell System's research and development program, Arnold could obtain the newest pumping equipment and achieve a much higher vacuum, and within a year he had the amplifier needed. AT&T and Western Electric engineers made further circuit changes needed for telephony, AT&T management arranged for manufacture under de Forest's basic patent, and the amplifier went into production. On January 25, 1915, Bell in New York repeated to Watson in San Francisco his famous words, "Mr. Watson, come here. I want to see you."



Lee de Forest's audion and an improved version developed by H. D. Arnold for long distance telephony.

As the telecommunications industry grew, the vacuum tube was improved many times, but by the 1940s it was reaching its inherent limitations. Scientists at Bell Laboratories saw promise in a class of materials called semiconductors. From their carefully thought-out search came the discovery in 1947 of the transistor effect—the amplification and control of the flow of electrons in a solid material. Again the enormous problems of putting the discovery into practical form were far more quickly and expertly solved by collaboration between people at Bell Labs and Western Electric than could ever have been the case otherwise.

The story of the search for ways to strengthen telephone voices shows, in a rather simple way, many of the elements of the Bell System's research and development effort as it is carried on today: A perceived need in telephone operations. Corporate management that emphasizes service improvement. A commitment to exploration in relevant areas of basic science. A development effort, adequately funded, to move from discovery to practical use. Free exchange of information among people in research, development and manufacturing. And finally use of the discovery in equipment or a product to meet the need originally perceived. That final stage is what gives a laboratory discovery the right to be truly called an "innovation". And the expectation that applicable new knowledge will be used in the Bell System makes it possible to commit each year the millions of

H. D. Arnold

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dollars necessary to search for it.

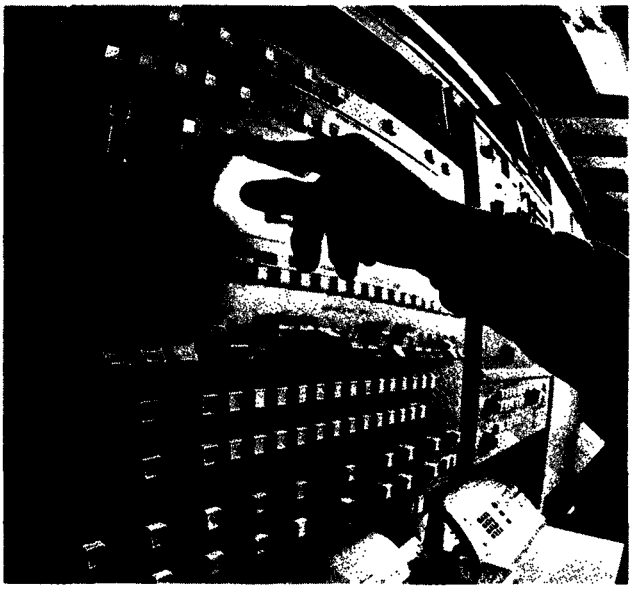
The amplifier story has an extra dimension, the use of innovations in many fields outside telephony. That is true of much Bell System research and development. It is corporate policy to publish new findings, to make new technology available to other companies through licensing arrangements, and to exchange technology with others. Vacuum tubes made possible radiotelephones, television broadcasting, improved phonographs and sound motion pictures. Scientists and engineers working for the Bell System made many contributions to all these innovations and the new industries that sprang from them. But the main objective of their investigations has been the improvement of the nation's telecommunications network and the myriad of services it provides.

The transistor, in its turn, gave birth to the whole new industry of solid-state electronics. It made practical such developments as the large-capacity computer for data processing, high-speed transmission of data between computers, space travel and communications via space satellites. Most important for the ordinary telephone user, the transistor made possible a new generation of switching machines for routing calls to their destinations—machines controlled by instructions stored in changeable memories. These electronic switching systems, now being installed, are many times faster than the best electromechanical systems. They provide enormously increased capacity and flexibility to meet the growth needs of the 1980s.

It is characteristic of a technologically oriented industry that technology must be prepared in anticipation of needs. The search requires a huge investment, both of time and money. And success depends on careful planning and close coordination of effort, in a process that runs from basic scientific exploration through fundamental development work, specific design, manufacturing capability, distribution and delivery to the ultimate consumer. For many industries, including telecommunications, the process also includes activities in maintenance, servicing and operation.

The transistor was invented at Bell Labs in 1947. Today, thousands of transistors can be made on one tiny integrated circuit chip.

In the Bell System, that process involves twenty-three regional operating companies, plus Bell Labs, Western Electric and the Long Lines Department. All these parts share one goal: to provide telecommunications services at the lowest possible cost to everyone.



Electronic switching systems, now in wide use, provide high speed and flexibility for the nation's telecommunications needs.

Such cooperation produces results.

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According to the June 28, 1976, issue of *Business Week*:

By almost any measure, Bell Labs has contributed more to the telecommunications industry and more to the U.S. economy than any other research establishment....A major part of Bell Labs' charter is to keep well ahead in technology so that no significant development applicable to telecommunications will be unavailable to the Bell System. The bargaining power made available through extensive patent holdings gives AT&T ready access to the inventions of others when the company needs them.

Since 1925, the people at Bell Labs and Western Electric have received more than 24,000 U.S. patents, which have been made widely available to all of U.S. industry and the world.

Bell System research and development work is well underway on new communications technologies to meet the needs of telephone service in the future. For example, Bell scientists and engineers are now working on a practical way to use lightwaves for communications. They have already developed pinpoint light sources—light-emitting diodes, and lasers no larger than a grain of sand. (Both projects benefited from earlier Bell research on semiconductors.) To carry

Lightwave communications technology, now being tested, uses new solid-state light sources and glass fibers to transmit phone calls.

light around corners, or under city streets, they are using tiny strands of ultra-transparent glass called "lightguides." Right now an experimental lightwave communications system is being tested by Bell Labs and Western Electric engineers in Atlanta. Light and glass may one day join electricity and copper wire in the nationwide telecommunications network, and we may in fact "talk by light". Those are Alexander Graham Bell's words, describing his photophone.

One Bell System. It works.

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not only a spirited and politically adroit Israel is needed, but also American Churchills to educate their countrymen. It surely does not help to implant in the U.S. the grotesquely untruthful notion that only a "small minority" in Israel is resisting the process leading to a "Munich-type agreement."

In parenthesis, Mr. Podhoretz's use of the word "strident" to describe the imaginary "small minority" has its element both of tragedy and of humor. Tragedy because there is surely enough to be strident about. We see a worldwide coalition (in effect) of all the Arab states, determined in the final analysis to complete Hitler's work, supported by Moscow and most of the Communist bloc, backed by the Third World, now also by France and Italy and Japan, encouraged by U.S. State Department policy—and facing it the same blindness and wishful thinking of Jewish leaders, the same mindless drive toward an abyss, and this with the supercilious aplomb of superior wisdom. Would stridency not then be understandable?

Unconscious humor because I, being of that "small strident minority" and perhaps therefore unable to judge the volume and timbre of our voice, found myself thinking as, admiringly, I read Mr. Podhoretz's essay, that this was an article that, by and large, could reasonably appear not only in Israel's centrist *Ma'ariv* (as, I'm glad to say, it did) but also, without disharmony, in *Zot Ha'aretz,* the organ of the Land of Israel movement—by Mr. Podhoretz's definition the very temple of stridency and, in fact, the most consistently sane political journal in Israel.

Finally, a word about the suggestion in Mr. Podhoretz's article that the vast majority of Jews in Israel are so afraid of the problems posed by the million Arabs in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza that they contemplate giving up those areas to the Arabs.

This, again, is simply not so. The survey I have quoted—and every poll—bears this out; and it is, after all, no secret that precisely on a possible withdrawal from Judea and Samaria and Gaza—the only area where the demographic problem exists—is there the most determined opposition. Moreover, the repetition of the theme of wihdrawal for demographic reasons can only serve to stiffen the determination of the Sadats and the Faisals, and the Assads and Arafats, and their confidence in ultimate victory.

The problem itself is in fact a tremendous headache. It must be tackled with intelligence, with courage, and with an understanding of the human problem involved. It will require a combination of remedies, but none of them can be applied except by a sovereign Israeli government which will make it clear that, just as in Jerusalem, *Eretz Yisrael*—which the Arabs call *Falastin*—will remain united under Jewish auspices.

I do not here suggest a blueprint. I do not believe any blueprint prepared today could be valid. What should be said, however, is that two guiding principles would be essential for creating the *modus vivendi* of a solution:

1. Equality of rights and obligations of all citizens of the Jewish state.

2. No coercion of Arabs to acquire citizenship.

Above all, however, the demographic problem is first and foremost a *Jewish,* not an Arab, problem. The prophets of doom not only assume a freezing of present birth rates, but ignore the fact that the life blood of the Jewish state is immigration, *aliyah*. Without *aliyah,* the essence of Zionism, the Zionist venture will be in dire danger even without any Arab help—even if we could live in attenuated borders. *Aliyah* is the first imperative for all who are concerned with the Jewish future.

SAMUEL KATZ

Tel Aviv, Israel

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "The Abandonment of Israel" Norman Podhoretz traces with ruthless objectivity the steady . . . deterioration of Washington's suport for Israel, and its continuing surrender to Arab threats and blackmail. Readers who might be . . . shocked by the title should first read the article; in it they will find no weak link in the carefully built chain of evidence.

The moral strength of this great country . . . is not evident today as we grovel before the Arabs and rush to meet their slightest demand. Neither oil nor balance of payments can be fashioned into a moral position.

Just as we built up Japan so that it could attack us, we are now, to an even greater degree, arming such racist Arab countries as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Southern Yemen, and Jordan, and soon Egypt and Syria—all totalitarian countries and enemies of the democratic way of life. . . . The almighty dollar dominates our international affairs. We are for sale to the highest bidder. Today it is the Arabs. Tomorrow? Who knows?

. . . When the Arab confrontation and back-up states have been saturated with American planes and missiles and tanks and guns, then the "abandonment of Israel" will be climaxed by an Arab ultimatum. Israel's reply might well be what Mr. Podhoretz describes in his last two paragraphs. Of course, Israel will not surrender. It is the only country in the world that will not bow to terror or threat. . . .

JOSHUA BEN-SAMUEL

Los Angeles, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Norman Podhoretz's article could not have come at a more crucial time for all concerned. Though the article may not contain the key to Middle East peace, it strips away the layers of propaganda, both Arab and American, to expose the basic issue at stake: Israel's right to exist, under conditions and in areas that will assure, as far as is humanly possible, the permanence of that existence. . . .

American military leaders have testified to the importance to America of maintaining a strong Israel as an ally in the Eastern Mediterranean. Admiral Elmo Zumwalt . . . in his recent book, *On Watch,* in commenting that our commitment to Israel "apparently" involves many military risks, adds that the "United States would face the same risks in intensified form in the Middle East if there were no Israel." He sees the Soviets as the "principal fomenters of trouble" with the long-range objective of getting control of Arab oil. "I have no doubt that if Israel fell, the Soviets would find it both simple and advantageous to turn from egging on the Arabs against Israel to egging on one set of Arabs against another. In that situation the U.S. still would be threatened with the loss of Middle Eastern oil and still would be compelled to ship out arms—and to much less potent and reliable friends than Israel, at that." Zumwalt emphasizes that ". . . a strong Israel plays a critical part in safeguarding America's interests not only in the Middle East but in Europe as well." . . .

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It is an absolute fact that Israel has never threatened or attacked any Arab state that desired peaceful relations. The Arabs, the true intransigents, have kept the Middle East in continual turmoil with five major wars against Israel, and probably five times as many with each other. Lebanon is but the latest. Being substantially Christian and democratic, its destruction was an inevitable step in the Arab march for an all-Arab and an all-Muslim Middle East. That is why Israel is such a bone in the collective throat of the Arab "nation." Arab imperialism is the block to peace, not the refugees (Arab-spawned), not the "Palestinians" (who were Jordanians without a whimper for nearly twenty years), not "inalienable rights" (of which there was not a trace during 500 years of Arab rule over Palestine and during another 500 years of Turkish rule). This Arab imperialism is just as dangerous to America as is the Russian brand. . . .

But the "abandonment of Israel," which Mr. Podhoretz so brilliantly documents, need not happen. The Jews, an ancient people, have faced many trials. Ancient Israel rose and fell, rose and fell, and rose again in the modern era. Its people today speak the same tongue, worship the same God, and live in the same land as their ancient forebears. . . . In the final analysis, only Israel can abandon Israel, and before that can happen, young, strong hands will take the helm.

The world can help in the process of keeping Israel strong, secure, and independent, or it can hinder the process. It can make Israel suffer a bit more, take more losses; but after the six million, there is no terror Israel cannot face and vanquish. . . .

CHARLES J. LEVIN
Los Angeles, California

NORMAN PODHORETZ writes:

As I think I made clear in "The Abandonment of Israel," my position is that Israel should give up territory *only* as part of a settlement involving an acknowledgment by the Arab countries, and the Palestinians as well, of the right of a sovereign Jewish state to exist in the Middle East in peace and security (both of which entail negotiation over boundary lines and inter-state relations).

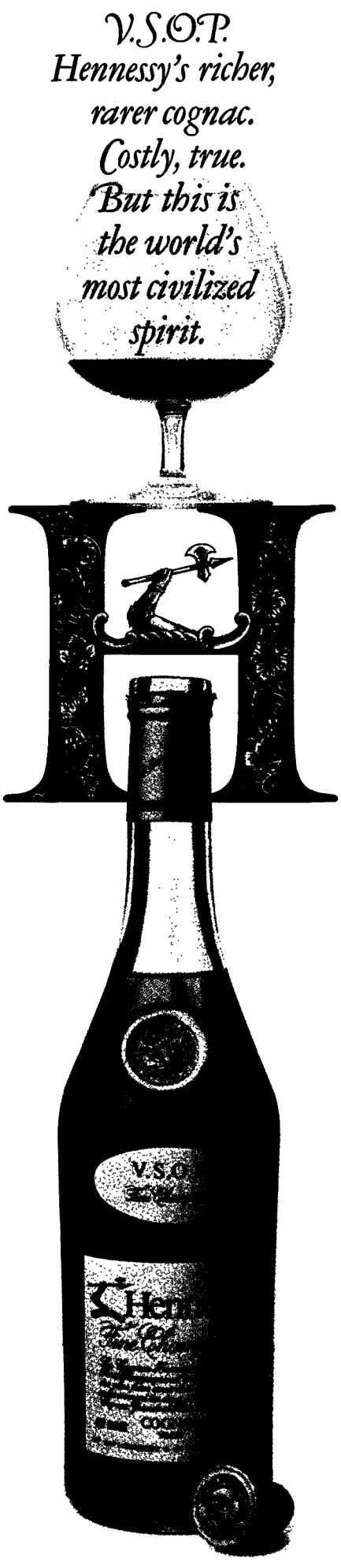
If I am "misinformed" in believing that the vast majority of Israelis would be ready, and indeed eager, to accept such a settlement, the figures Samuel Katz cites certainly do not demonstrate that I am. They demonstrate only that most Israelis very sensibly reject the idea that one-sided territorial concessions by Israel can lead to peace. As for the "demographic problem"—i.e., the brutal fact that Israel cannot hold onto the territories without endangering either the Jewish or the democratic character of the state or both—Mr. Katz's reliance on high Jewish birth rates and *aliyah* for a solution seems to me as unrealistic as his assessment of the political climate within Israel itself.

Socialisms

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Stephen Miller's criticism of modern socialist theory ["The Poverty of Socialist Thought," August] represents less an ill-conceived analysis than a polemic in its own right. While American socialist thought has indeed displayed a rather basic "poverty" in precise and meaningful social critique, there is little gained from the kind of gloating ideology which Mr. Miller throws back at the likes of Irving Howe and Michael Harrington. One immediately doubts the sincerity of the analysis when first stumbling upon the insistent refusal to differentiate between "authentic socialism" and the "so-called socialism" of Russia and Eastern Europe (the cynical quotation marks reflect Mr. Miller's apparent non-belief in any real difference between the socialism of Howe and Harrington, and that of Stalin and Lenin). Surely, without a more precise and discriminating typology, any analysis of American socialism is bound to be stained by the authoritarianism of Eastern European Communism. The American version is doomed to be judged either as utopian or as supporting Stalinism.

An adequate study of the present generation of American socialist theorists, who must be recognized as somewhat peripheral to the mainstream of American political thought, should of necessity take into account both current conditions of modern industrial society and the peculiar American history of radical socialist thought. In this respect, Harrington looks decidedly less irrelevant and Howe more



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firmly rooted in the American tradition of "literary socialism." While there are far better scholarly attempts to "rescue" Marx than that found in Harrington, and Howe's literary socialism puts him among far more distinguished company, still the useless and often trite criticism by Mr. Miller hardly points the reader toward greener pastures. In his article, Mr. Miller seems to stress all of the standard clichés employed by those so concerned with "liberty" and "freedom" (Hayek notwithstanding). There is the often-used "religious metaphor," though anyone familiar with Harrington would realize the inappropriateness of the label "fundamentalist." Mr. Miller uses the familiar and totally inaccurate description of modern economic planning as being composed of countless bureaucrats making all of those intensely personal decisions which are normally reserved for consumers. There is even the silly and tasteless cliché from the 60's about how social critics would be the first to go in a "real" socialist society (a socialist state "might even arrest Harrington for his 'anti-social' behavior"). There are also some serious academic inaccuracies, such as a misconception of Kuhn's "paradigm" and its already widespread usage among social scientists, and an unhealthy tendency to pay Harrington credit for his analysis of Marxism ("Harrington is impressive as a Marxist preacher, dazzling us with his fund of quotations from Marx's massive *oeuvre*"). While respectable, the study would hardly "dazzle" anyone who has read the vast literature on Marx.

In the end, Mr. Miller offers little in the way of useful criticism of a subject very much in need of attention. His use of clichés and ideology is hardly rewarding, either as analysis or as an alternate theory in itself.

SHELDON D. POLLACK
Cornell University
Ithaca, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

While Stephen Miller raises some fundamental questions, I find several of his arguments unconvincing. I shall confine myself to his views about the failure of socialism.

I have no quarrel with Mr. Miller's point that the economic content of socialism is variously defined by different socialist organizations and individual "authorities." What I find obfuscating and simplistic is his subsuming all . . . current "socialisms" under a single rubric, pursuant to contemporary fashion in circles that are either uninformed or malicious. . . .

Because Sakharov, as a result of his misguided upbringing, refers to Russia as a socialist state, does his statement make it so? When Hitler called his party National Socialist, did the name make his criminal gang socialists? When Bill Moyers, either out of ignorance or as a result of sloppy thinking, kept referring to this "socialist party" during a TV interview of a Socialist Workers' party representative, did this change the SWP's Communist colors?

To take another example, which Mr. Miller mentions casually but fails to develop logically: the woods are full of ignorant publicists who refer to "democracies" of the Eastern European type. Does this mean that democracy therefore has no definite meaning which can be distinguished from the fraudulent "democracies" of the various peoples' republics?

No, Mr. Miller, when Sakharov and others use the term "socialism," they are not "speaking of what has taken place"; they are speaking of a society which has been mislabeled socialist by its overlords in order to mislead and to let them sell their fraudulent bill of goods more readily. When Mr. Miller tells us that "the socialist dream has been, for most people, a nightmare," he is referring, I assume, not to Sweden, Denmark, and Israel, but to Russia, China, and Poland. Socialist countries, indeed! It's too bad that scholars like Mr. Miller—and unfortunately there are many like him—fall into the trap.

CHARLES COGEN
New York City

STEPHEN MILLER writes:

No doubt my unhealthy tendencies will forever prevent me from making a reply that will satisfy Sheldon D. Pollack. Nevertheless, I should like to say that when I suggested that Michael Harrington

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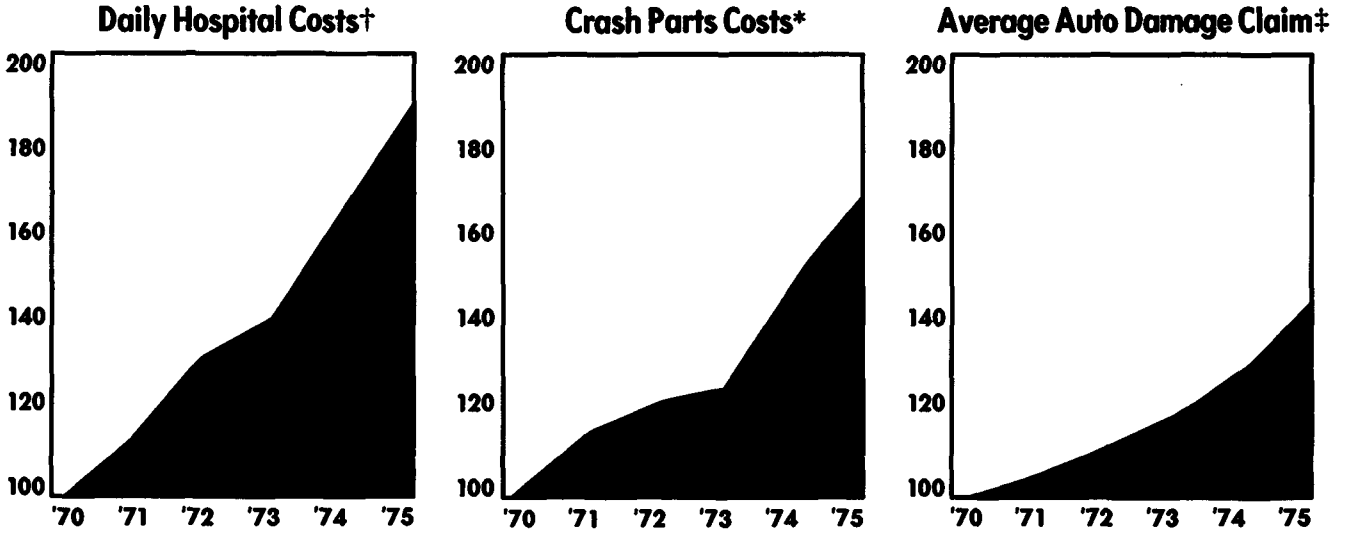

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might be arrested for his "anti-social" behavior I was not making the commonplace remark that the revolution devours its children. I was pointing to the evasive and insidious way in which Harrington uses such an open-ended word as anti-social. One further point: Mr. Pollack's letter is indicative of a persistent strain in Marxian polemics—the use of the word ideology as a term of abuse. Mr. Pollack has ideas whereas I, alas, possess an ideology.

I did not imply, as Charles Cogen suggests, that we should gauge socialism solely by such states as the Soviet Union, China, etc. But surely it is misleading to claim, as he does, that these are not socialist states. When Sakharov says Russia is a socialist state he is of course referring to Marxian socialism, and we do know that all states that have based their legitimacy on some blend of Marxism-Leninism are states that do not allow their citizens "formal" freedoms. So much for Sakharov's "misguided upbringing."

There is, as Mr. Cogen no doubt knows, another socialist tradition, the non-Marxian one, but this tradition is so vague and contradictory about its program that it is hard to say what states in the world qualify as socialist. By the standards of this tradition Sweden, Denmark, and Israel could be called socialist, but so then could the United States; the differences are of degree rather than of kind. The key distinction in these matters is political, not economic: Sweden, Denmark, and Israel are, like the United States, constitutional democracies whose citizens possess the so-called formal freedoms. Moreover, the citizens of these countries may, if they so choose, vote down particular "socialist" measures.

Carter's Populism

To the Editor of Commentary:

By stressing Jimmy Carter's religion as a source of uneasiness among Jews, Milton Himmelfarb ["Carter and the Jews," August] misses the real concern many Jews have about Carter: his populist heritage which he still embraces. Carter's religious fervor was, certainly, one reason for this concern, but only a superficial one. Jewish support in the primary campaign for Morris Udall, a Mormon, belies a knee-jerk Jewish prejudice against a candidate because of his religion. It is the whole nexus of Jimmy Carter's background—religious, political, and geographical—that caused concern, a concern that lessened when it became apparent that Carter was not a Wallace, but grew—and still grows—as we learn more about his populist image of himself. (He has described himself as a populist rather than a liberal and speaks with pride of the influence populism has had on his thought.)

For example, on the eve of his nomination, Carter's mother, Mrs. Lillian Carter, who by all accounts has had a great influence on Jimmy Carter's upbringing and philosophy, told Walter Cronkite of her admiration for Tom Watson, "a socialist or some kind of 'ist.'" Tom Watson, as Mr. Himmelfarb points out, was not only a socialist, "more accurately a populist," but a racist, and one of the first order. He was an evangelistic Protestant like the Carters, but to him the Catholic Church was an enemy not because it was a different religion but because he perceived it as demanding loyalty of American citizens to a foreign entity (the Pope); Jews were the enemy not because they were the Antichrist but because they were capitalists and Yankees presumably attempting to repress the poor folk in the South still under the yoke of Civil War defeat and Reconstruction.

Mrs. Carter seemed to think nothing of extolling Watson's virtues and appeared completely oblivious to his vices. She told how her family were rabid supporters of Watson during the height of Watson's anti-black, anti-Catholic, and anti-Jewish period. This would be comparable to, say, George Bernard Shaw continuing to praise Mussolini after World War II.

It is not simply a question of anti-Semitism. Put simply, populism means the will of the people: *Vox Populi, Vox Dei.* Jews, liberals, intellectuals, and moralists normally shy away from a person who adheres to the concept that rights and wrongs are determined solely by the will of the people . . .

As Richard Hofstadter pointed out in *The Age of Reform:* "A full history of modern anti-Semitism in the United States would reveal . . . its substantial populist lineage."

[Hon.] Lewis Kapner
West Palm Beach, Florida

To the Editor of Commentary:

Milton Himmelfarb leaves—I think inadvertently—the distinct impression that Eugene V. Debs must either have been a villain or a fool to speak well of Tom Watson's populism while ignoring his background as an "anti-Semite, anti-Catholic, and racist." Mr. Himmelfarb identifies these reprehensible qualities with populism because they happened to occur in the long life of the same human being.

What if, as it appears in this case, those qualities existed in different editions of the same man? Ralph McGill (in *The South and the Southerner*) differentiates the populist Watson, who made the first serious effort to unite white and black poor against exploitative Old Southern money, from the later, embittered Watson, who embarrassed his former friends with every public statement he made, and cites a single reason for the break in Watson's thinking: that he was certifiably insane, having cracked up after the sellout of the populists by a corrupt political machine.

This is not to play down the undoubted damage Watson did during his decline. Mr. Himmelfarb is quite right in laying the blame for the detestable Leo Frank lynching at Watson's door. There was a time, however, when Watson was an upright and honorable man, fearless in the pursuit of a just cause. There was a time when he earned, and twice over, the praise of a man like Debs; and the movement he championed in those days certainly should not have to bear the burden of the terrible errors he made when reason had deserted him.

I am, on the other hand, happy to see Mr. Himmelfarb—a man whom reason or reasonableness will never desert—coming out forthrightly against the fashionable religious and regional bigotry against Governor Carter (see the articles by Richard Reeves and Jimmy Breslin). What is emphatically not sauce for the goose is demonstrably not sauce for the gander, and a posture which was rightly regarded as vile when used against John F. Kennedy does not automatically become righteous when used against Jimmy Carter.

And—it is worth pointing out a little-known fact or two at this moment—Governor Carter does, in fact, come from the same state in

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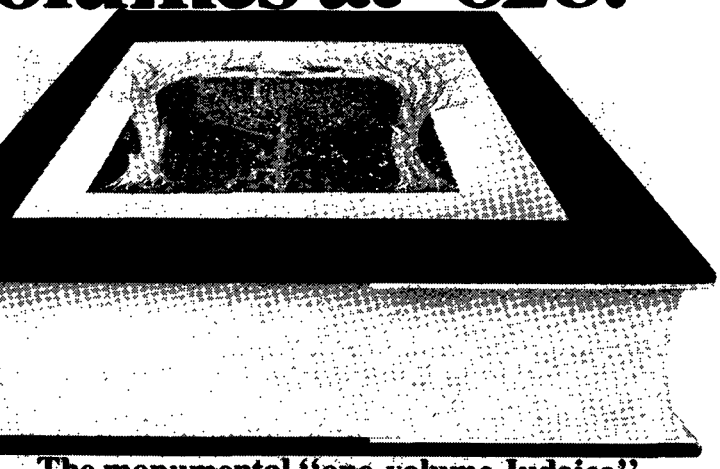

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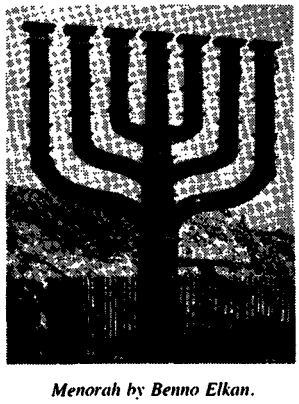

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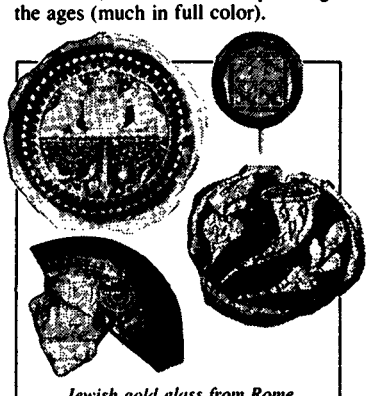

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which the Frank murder occurred; but he also comes from the only one of the original thirteen colonies in which Jews are among the founding fathers. Fact: the cornerstone of Temple Mikve Israel in Savannah was laid within a year of the founding of the Georgia colony. Fact: within the first year of the colony, fully one-third of Savannah's population was Jewish. Fact: virtually every civic body founded in the first twenty years of the colony had at least one prominent Jewish member (this included the first library, the first orphanage, and the first charity hospital). Fact: the Georgia colony was one in which the Jewish community, during the Revolution, provided not financiers but fighting heroes (a fact which George Washington was quick to acknowledge, in an open letter famous in the Savannah community). As Governor Carter's Georgia background is a factor in the election, these—and perhaps a few other—facts deserve airing.

GEORGE WARREN
Van Nuys, California

Moralism & Foreign Policy

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Nathan Glazer's "American Values and American Foreign Policy" [July] is the most urbane and farsighted discussion of the problem of moralism and realism in American foreign policy since the early writings of Hans Morgenthau. But it is disappointing to find Mr. Glazer, with Daniel P. Moynihan, standing in the end among the camp followers of moralism, better known to its adherents as "idealism."

Mr. Glazer argues that the threat represented by the product of Communist intentions and Communist capacity is so great that a traditional power-balance policy based on narrow security interests is not enough, and that the promotion of moral values must enter into the formulation of policy. Actually, his very accurate description of Communist power, practice, and design is precisely the input necessary for an intelligent and effective traditional policy, one which devotes itself to reducing the extent to which the people of the United States will in the future be compelled by external forces or circumstances to do things they would otherwise prefer not to do. But the threat which Communism poses to the United States should not properly influence a moral question.

An efficient defense of the United States does not require banging the old drums of anti-Communist crusading or the new drums of "democracy." Intelligent statesmen for thousands of years (mostly years of progress) have designed foreign policies without reference to abstract moral issues, although they have of course presented the resulting policies to the groundlings as morally motivated and justified. As Mr. Glazer points out, in today's world only the Communists seem to share America's proclivity to lecture, uplift, and to save foreigners.

And just what are these universal, divinely ordained values we are supposed to impose on mankind? It looks suspiciously as though they reflect fleeting intellectual fashions. Unfortunately the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Federalist do not, despite Mr. Glazer's assumption, provide such truths. In fact, the last two documents, if they contain any underlying value, just warn against the assumption that timeless and universal political and social values exist at all. . . .

Mr. Glazer has profiled the contemporary aspect of a permanent problem: the differential enforcement of one's moral imperatives as between friends and enemies. Today we have reversed the usual pattern; a few years ago, within a period of ten days, one Deputy Assistant Secretary of State was assuring a congressional committee that the United States had no intention whatever of interfering with Cuba's internal affairs, and would normalize relations any time that Cuba would abandon its aggressive, subversive, and guerrilla campaigns against America's allies, while another Deputy Assistant Secretary was assuring another committee that regardless of the NATO alliance, the sole purpose and aim of the United States was to force the Greek government of the colonels to restore civil liberties and hold free elections for parliament. . . .

From Tom Paine to Woodrow Wilson, from Dulles to Fulbright, we have been afflicted by these physicians of the soul hawking the stylish elixir of the day as a cosmic nostrum. They contribute to intelligent security policy about as much as the advertising genius who writes copy about queen-bee honey or Patagonian oils or natural herbs contributes to the formula for a soap that will get rid of dirt.

JOHN W. BOWLING
Troy State University
Troy, Alabama

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

There are certain unpleasant facts the American people and their government ignore only at their peril: (1) Americans are becoming increasingly dependent on oil from the Middle East; (2) the Soviet Union is strengthening its military position vis-à-vis the United States, especially along the sea routes that carry oil to Americans and our allies.

Nathan Glazer correctly points out that certain groups in the U.S., including editorial writers in college newspapers, are more concerned with American racism, imperialism, arrogance, immorality, etc. than with the dangers of increasing American economic and military vulnerability. While the affluent liberal elite can indulge itself with the purity of American conscience and policy, the other 95-plus per cent of Americans have a right to know whether the United States government has the capacity and will . . . to defend American and allied interests from economic and political blackmail and the spreading influence of the Soviet Union. . . .

Americans have far more common sense and intelligence than the elite will ever admit. Americans understand that power is at the heart and soul of foreign affairs. They know that a weak America with its secrets and vices exposed will not protect our vital interests. The critical question is whether or not the leadership of the U.S. government is willing to call upon and heed the needs of the average American, or will the elite and affluent maintain their undeserved control of national affairs? . . .

ALAN R. GOLDMAN
Fitchburg State College
Fitchburg, Massachusetts

On Lawyers

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . It is the thesis of my book, *Unequal Justice*, which Joseph W. Bishop, Jr., reviewed in August, that justice in the United States has been distributed according to race, ethnicity, and wealth, rather than need; that the primary responsibility for injustice rests with a professional elite which struc-

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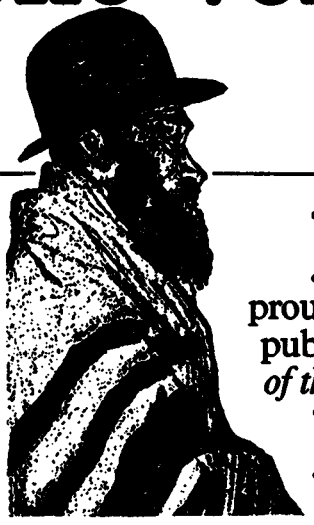

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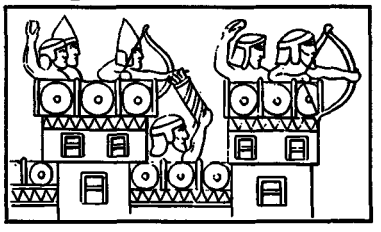

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By Scholars at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem

H.H. Ben-Sasson, Editor

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tures legal education, bar admissions, ethics, discipline, and legal services to reflect the social, economic, and political preferences of its members and their clients; and that anti-Semitism, racism, xenophobia, and sexism pervade the legal profession at its elite levels.

I mention my thesis only because Mr. Bishop, so evidently discomforted by the evidence that sustains it, prefers to ignore or distort it. He offers an illuminating, if depressing, example of what thinking like a lawyer can mean. He suggests that the thesis is familiar but outrageous; untrue but perhaps true. From that jumble emerges the sleazy accusation that the abundant evidence of professional anti-Semitism proves only that *Unequal Justice* is racist, an example of double-think that last appeared in the resolution branding Zionism as racism. In a sneering *ad hominem* Mr. Bishop confesses to suspicions about my departure from law school, a low blow even by his ankle-high standards.

Readers of *Unequal Justice* will quickly discover that Mr. Bishop's suspicions have as little to do with the book as does his review. His observations on legal education are frivolous; on law-school admissions and law-firm hiring, ill-informed; on the cold war, reminiscent of American Bar Association leaders, *circa* 1950. A few corrections, on the single point of anti-Semitism, must suffice:

1. Anti-Semitism in the Brandeis nomination controversy was hardly covert or inconsequential. I urge Mr. Bishop to read the correspondence of William Howard Taft, former President of the United States and the ABA, member of the Yale Law faculty, and future Chief Justice, referring to Brandeis's Zionism as his metaphorical circumcision. Taft was one of six former ABA presidents to attest to Brandeis's defective ethics and "character"—euphemisms for his Jewishness.

2. Although Harlan Stone's attitudes were relatively benign within elite circles, he shared the genteel prejudice of his group. But Mr. Bishop, like the Columbia faculty members who became hysterical after Stone's own words were accurately quoted in the New York *Times* review of *Unequal Justice*, prefers to believe that Stone did not mean what he said. Evidence from Stone's own writings, covering a ten-year period, contradicts Mr. Bishop's wishful thinking. I do believe Mr. Bishop's statements that some of Stone's law clerks (like other people's best friends) were Jews.

3. My references to the prejudices of an "Anglo-Saxon professional elite," which clearly stung Mr. Bishop, are accurate descriptions of historical fact. I am sorry that the evidence offends him, but I am even sorrier that so many minority-group lawyers were wounded by discrimination. Rather than confront disagreeable evidence, Mr. Bishop maliciously distorts my account. For example, although I described William D. Guthrie as "waspish," Mr. Bishop neatly altered the form to "Waspish." Guthrie, a Catholic, was waspish, not Waspish—a distinction with a difference.

The real professional problem, however, goes far deeper than Messrs. Taft, Stone, Guthrie, or even Bishop—who merely exemplify it. It is the systemic pattern of racial and ethnic discrimination built into professional elitism, and the smug indifference to it of Mr. Bishop and other bar Bourbons, that still contribute to unequal justice.

JEROLD S. AUERBACH
Wellesley College
Wellesley, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Joseph W. Bishop, Jr., . . . misses the point when he fails to perceive the pervasive distrust of lawyers and the legal establishment. Perhaps he should examine the results of a Gallup Poll (New York *Times*, August 22, 1976) assessing "the honesty and ethical standards of people in different fields." Only 25 per cent of lawyers rated high, as contrasted with 55 per cent of medical doctors and 44 per cent of college teachers. He might note an article in the same issue of the *Times* dealing with "Lawyers and Ethics: How Much Help for the Poor?" Erwin Griswold, former dean of the Harvard Law School and former U.S. Solicitor General, was asked, "Why shouldn't lawyers be required to do at least some free work?" His response was incredible: "Should carpenters build houses free?" All hail professionalism!

Mr. Bishop should also consult "The Talk of the Town" in the *New Yorker* (August 22, 1976) where it was reported that some 40,000 New York City lawyers, in response to a special appeal for legal aid for the poor, managed to volunteer free services equivalent to that of *one* full-time lawyer, along with contributions of $3,000, insufficient to pay for a solicitation mailed to members of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York. John Mitchell and cohorts probably misplaced more than that in $100 bills in their recently well-publicized *pro bono* activities.

Mr. Bishop's *ad hominem* attack on Jerold S. Auerbach cannot obfuscate the failure of law students to take away from their grandiosely titled courses some moral lessons and a sense of concern for the individual and society as a whole. How else can one explain the failure of the courts to penalize an Attorney General such as Richard Kleindienst, Harvard Law degree and all, for debasing his high office?

Mr. Auerbach's fervent disquisition has its failings, both in content and style, but it points a finger at the disinterested stance the legal establishment takes toward equal access to legal services and equal treatment by the law and lawyers. If Mr. Bishop would provide facts and statistics to refute Mr. Auerbach's damning indictment of the legal system instead of offering impassioned tendentious defenses on isolated issues, his arguments could be taken more seriously.

[Dr.] HAROLD P. LAZAR
Chicago, Illinois

JOSEPH W. BISHOP, JR., writes:

Jerold S. Auerbach's letter is about what I expected, having read his book. That is to say, it is intemperate, inaccurate, frequently irrelevant, and full of accusations and assertions which are unsupported by the evidence, if any. There is perhaps a trifle less personal abuse than I had anticipated, although still plenty. In any case, I do not intend to reply in kind.

In the first place, I started off by stating unambiguously that some of his major charges against the legal profession had in the past been true and that some others still are. I have in fact made some of them myself, in COMMENTARY and elsewhere, although with more care and qualification, and less self-righteous rhetoric. I gave him his full due and maybe more. My criticism was essentially that he had "marred his argument by suggestion of the false, suppression of the true, distortion of his adversaries'

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arguments, and the frequent use of half-truth and sometimes simple untruth." Indeed, he makes no effort to refute (except by calling me names) most of my serious criticisms.

Now for a few observations on his allegations. Manifesting an uncharacteristic concern for the Queensberry Rules, he describes as a "low blow" my suspicion that outraged idealism was not his only reason for leaving Columbia Law School. That suspicion was, as I said, based on doubt that anyone capable of the cavalier contempt for fact and the shoddy reasoning (particularly well exemplified by his attack on Alexander M. Bickel) which mark *Unequal Justice* would be likely to do well in the study of law. If that suspicion is unjust, Mr. Auerbach can easily refute it by producing his record at Columbia.

My "observations on legal education are frivolous." I have been in the law-professor business for twenty years; while my ideas may be wrong, they are hardly frivolous. On law-school admissions, I am "ill-informed." I have been a member of the Yale Law School Admissions Committee about a dozen times and am now serving for the third time as chairman. In the latter capacity I have had a good deal to do with the Law School Admissions Council, an organization of law-school admissions officers, and participated in its panels and workshops. I suspect (another of my low suspicions) that I have rather more information on the subject than Mr. Auerbach. I didn't say anything about the cold war, so I don't know how Mr. Auerbach can make such confident assertions about my views—not that ignorance would deter him from slinging a handful of mud.

I find his "evidence" on William Howard Taft's alleged anti-Semitism much less than convincing. Although anti-Zionism has often served as a code word for anti-Semitism, it is quite possible to oppose Zionism, as some Jews do, without being anti-Semitic. Criticisms of Brandeis's ethics and character, made by many people who were above suspicion of anti-Semitism by anyone except Mr. Auerbach, were far more likely to have been founded on his connection with United Shoe Machinery (about which Mr. Auerbach *still* has nothing to say) than on his Jewishness. The extent of Mr. Auerbach's knowledge of Taft is shown by his book's description of Taft as a "corporation lawyer." In fact, Taft never practiced corporation law; as a judge, he had no doubt a good working knowledge of the subject but is not remembered for any landmark opinions.

Since Mr. Auerbach has chosen to reiterate his accusation that Chief Justice Stone was an anti-Semite, albeit "genteel," let us see whether his evidence is so conclusive that the Columbia faculty's resentment of the charge was "hysterical." (Mr. Auerbach seems to believe that any disagreement with him, if not simply malicious, is produced by hysteria.) Mr. Auerbach's evidence, in its entirety, consists of the following extracts from a very long letter, written by Stone when he was dean of Columbia Law School: "The influx to the bar of greater numbers of the unfit," "racial tendencies toward study

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by memorization," and "a mind almost Oriental in its fidelity to the minutiae of the subject without regard to any controlling rule or reason." The theme of the letter was criticism of bar examiners for setting questions which required just such qualities of the examinees. There is no mention of Jews, but, as I said in my review, the three phrases *can* be read as being aimed at Jewish law students, if one is searching for such evidence. It is at least as likely, however, that Stone had in mind other ethnic groups, including Wasps. Memorization by rote is a bad tradition in many systems of education, including that of England. See, for example, such diverse works as Hughes's *Tom Brown's Schooldays,* Dickens's *Hard Times,* Orwell's *Such, Such Were the Joys,* and Laurie Lee's *Cider with Rosie.* Even if the three phrases are given the worst possible construction, they are not much to set against the evidence of Harlan Stone's whole career.

I said explicitly that many of Mr. Auerbach's denigrations of Wasps were justified (though exaggerated) "descriptions of historical fact," but a few kind words for the many Wasps who weren't guilty would also have been accurate descriptions of historical fact. There are no such kind words. The capitalization of "waspish," as applied to William D. Guthrie, was an error, which I regret. But does Mr. Auerbach really expect us to believe that all he meant his readers to understand in the context was that Mr. Guthrie was quick to take offense, or possessed of a stinging wit? At best, his adjective is a clumsy *double-entendre.* I think it significant that he nowhere in his book mentioned that Guthrie, although white and reasonably "Anglo-Saxon" (he was of English and Scottish descent), was Catholic; it would not have suited his thesis to disclose that a very successful corporation lawyer, a conservative, a president of the New York State and City Bar Associations, happened not to be Protestant.

Finally, Mr. Auerbach repeats his charge that a "systemic pattern of racial and ethnic discrimination [is] built into professional elitism." And I repeat that this *was* generally so twenty or thirty years ago, but is simply untrue today. I don't suppose that even Mr. Auerbach would claim that it is true of law schools. As for the big firms, let us look at a very typical Wall Street firm, Cravath, Swaine & Moore, which was the target of Mr. Auerbach's piece on the Op Ed page of the New York *Times.* According to Martindale-Hubbell's Law Directory, there are among its forty-five active and three retired partners (judging by surnames alone, for no other information is available) six who are probably and four who are possibly Jewish; five who are Celtic Irish (and probably Catholic); and two who are Slavic. The percentages are almost certainly higher among the firm's associates, hired within the last eight or ten years.

I apologize for devoting so many words to anything as superficial as Mr. Auerbach's letter. Unfortunately, reasoned refutation always requires more space than unsupported accusation.

Harold P. Lazar rather misses the point of my review. Far be it from me to contend that lawyers are Nature's Noblemen or that they are as a group any more honest and ethical than doctors or accountants or other professionals. They often (like doctors) charge too much for their services; as is often not the case with doctors, their overcharges fall on their clients rather than the taxpayers. I said explicitly that "the legal profession has done a poor job of getting its services to people in the lower- and middle-income brackets at prices those people can afford." We have made more progress in providing adequate medical services to everyone than we have made with legal services, although I doubt that the organized medical profession deserves much of the credit. I think myself that the most hopeful remedies are something like Medicare and Medicaid (learning, we may hope, from the exposure of the abuses that have marked those programs), plus increased use of paraprofessionals in the less complex aspects of the practice of law. The medical profession, I freely concede, has some great advantages over the legal. No improvement in legal education can ever raise a lawyer's competence so far above that of a lawyer of two or three centuries ago as the competence of a modern doctor, no matter how small his natural gifts, is above that of Harvey and Jenner.

IREX Again

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Since it was I who provided Theodore Draper with the materials he cites in his debate with Daniel C. Matuszewski on Soviet-American academic exchanges [Letters from Readers, June, September], I am baffled by his continuing insistence that American researchers do not work on contemporary (i.e., post-World War II) topics in the Soviet Union. Even for the period 1972-75 alone, the materials which he cites contain 45 such entries, although Mr. Draper claims to have found only one.

Mr. Draper writes: "Is it too much to ask that American scholars should be able to work in the Soviet Union on subjects such as 'Soviet Dissidents and the Crisis of the 60's in the USSR,' 'Recent History of Soviet-Japanese Relations,' 'Ideals of Young Workers and Students in the Soviet Union,' 'Early and Contemporary Soviet-Chinese Relations,' 'Industrial and Labor Relations in the Soviet Union in the 1960's and 1970's,' and the like?" No, it isn't too much to ask, and yes, American scholars are able to work on most such topics.

Here are only a few pertinent examples of actual work which appear in the materials given Mr. Draper: "Occupational Choices of Soviet Youth," "How Conditions of Socialism and Atheism Affect Processes of Religious Change in the Soviet Union," "Soviet Labor Law and the Role of Trade Unions in Its Implementation," "Theoretical Development of Soviet Criminology," "Soviet Sinology," "Soviet Perspectives on Modern Society," "Ideology and Technical Innovation in the USSR," and "Attitudes of American and Soviet Youth Toward Work." The full list of some 80 topics covering 1969 through this year is much too long to cite here, but is available upon request to interested readers.

ALLEN H. KASSOF
International Research and
Exchanges Board
New York City

THEODORE DRAPER writes:

Now it is Allen H. Kassof's turn. First, Daniel C. Matuszewski invited me to be impressed by outside reviews of the International Research and Exchanges Board's program as if they would back up his case. I read the two sent to me and found that they did nothing of the sort. I can only conclude that the reference to outside reviews was something of a bluff. Nothing more is being said of them.

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Mr. Kassof now claims that the IREX annual reports for 1972-75 contain 45 post-World War II topics. At least half of these, according to his own list, are short-term "consultations," not the same as scholarly research at all. Of the remainder, his seven specific titles are supposed to be typical, which they are not. On rechecking, I could not find the third and fourth in the materials sent to me. The other five are hardly in the same political class as topics permitted to Soviet scholars in the United States, for which reason I did not take them as serious evidence of "essential reciprocity."

This exchange again convinces me that the whole subject needs an impartial outside study. For my part, I am quite ready to believe, as Mr. Matuszewski previously put it, that there has been a "slow development of increasingly frank scholarly interchanges, and the persistence of serious problems and deficiences." But "essential reciprocity"?—no.

Bertrand Russell

To the Editor of Commentary:

Sidney Hook ["Bertrand Russell the Man," July] wisely separates . . . Russell's unquestionable importance in the history of philosophy from his propensities to prejudice, tergiversation, and other modes of unclear thinking which he practiced to his dying days, often with apparent relish for the obviously illogical. That these tendencies are by no means limited to Russell's "non-philosophical" statements and writings can be seen in the perfunctory, or worse, treatment of thinkers he did not favor in his *A History of Western Philosophy*. As for his attitudes toward Jews, which his recent biographer, Ronald W. Clark, finds so embarrassing, these he was fully capable of contradicting, or at least suspending, as is nicely illustrated in an incident Felix Kaufmann used to enjoy relating. . . .

Professor Kaufmann had visited Russell in England on his way to the United States, after his extrication from Nazified Vienna (for which he always fervently thanked Alvin Johnson). When he told Russell he was going to New York City, Russell was enthusiastic, saying that this would give Kaufmann the opportunity to meet the "best" American philosopher. . . . Kaufmann then said to Russell that he assumed he meant John Dewey, certainly the most famous American philosopher of the time. No, Russell replied (with some acerbity, in Kaufmann's account), he meant Morris Raphael Cohen. For Kaufmann, who admired Cohen greatly but Dewey more, the statement was testimony, from one who was no less than a living immortal, of the richness of American thought.

The notorious Bertrand Russell case at City College (from which Cohen was then about to retire) was yet to come, to be sure, but the bitter exchanges between Dewey and Russell over the latter's connection of pragmatism with American "commercialism" had been rankling for some sixteen years. . . . [Yet] the definitive defense of Russell in the City College affair was edited, in 1941, by John Dewey—and by Horace M. Kallen, whose hospitality during a lecture tour of the United States years before had prompted Russell's remark . . . that after staying with Kallen he ". . . began to long for the uncircumcised."

Martin S. Dworkin
Teachers College
Columbia University
New York City

Hitler & World War II

To the Editor of Commentary:

Joseph Shattan's review of my book, *The Last European War* [Books in Review, August], consists of fifty-five sentences, of which approximately thirty-seven are wrong. Commentary has not the space, I have not the time, and I believe that neither of us has the inclination, to publish a correction of all of these. But I must take issue with his principal attribution: that my attitudes on anti-Semitism are "disappointing" and "tendentious." During World War II in my native country I witnessed the humiliation, the mistreatment, and, on occasion, the murder of Jewish relatives and friends. I was briefly put in prison by Nazis *and* Communists within a period of two years. My credentials in this respect were impeccable, which was one of the reasons why I received preferential treatment as a refugee entering the United States soon after the war. In my study of history, however, I reached conclusions somewhat different from those held by my liberal and radical colleagues. Some of my conclusions are stated in *The*

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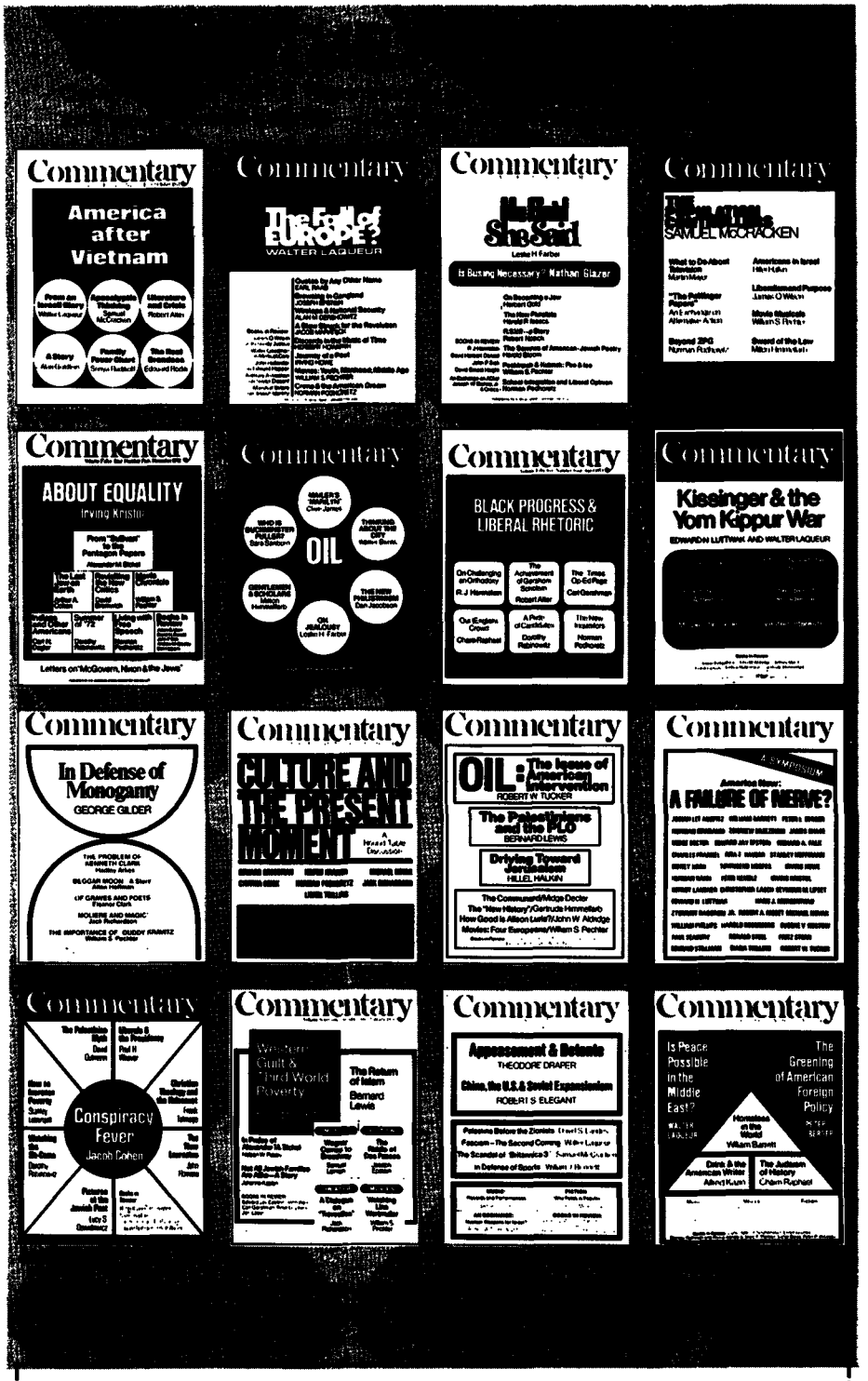
Last European War: for example, that Hitler was not mad (which is precisely why he was such a frightening and dangerous phenomenon); that, whatever the dark psychic motives from which his obsession had sprung, there was, in his mind, a cold and cruel logic about the need to eliminate Jews from Europe (this, far more than racism or anti-Bolshevism or *Lebensraum*, was Hitler's basic conviction); that especially among many of the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe there was much potential and actual anti-Semitism (a relatively modern and populist tendency that in some ways, though not in all, differed from the more ancient religious prejudice of Judeophobia); and that the result of Hitler's determination, assisted by some of these inclinations, was the greatest crime in modern history.

Mr. Shattan writes that these "attitudes" of mine "are disturbing, to say the least." He is not content with saying the least. He goes on to argue: "Lukacs feels that, apart from the 'Jewish issue,' Stalin was far worse than Hitler." I wrote (on page 325, and also elsewhere): "The criminal cruelties of the National Socialist Third Reich were worse than those perpetrated by the Soviet Union." Why doesn't he say what I wrote, instead of speculating on what I "feel"? The attribution of motives is a pestilential habit of the modern intellect. It may be sustained by the fabrication of evidence, of which the superficially most convincing version is the attribution of statements to one's subject, often through false quotation. Mr. Shattan quotes me as writing that "thoughtful people might have become amenable to the argument that, after all was said, Hitler and Nazism were less evil and much less cruel than Stalin and Communism." But he leaves out my next sentence: "There are millions in Europe, and not only in Germany, who believe this even now. For those who don't"—and I make it abundantly clear that I don't—"the decisive argument is the mass murder of the Jews." He says that I "quote extensively from the really appalling theories of a Jewish convert to Christianity, 'the extraordinary young Jewish genius,' Otto Weininger." My Weininger quote consists of three sentences, both before and after which I state that Weininger was *wrong*.

In concluding his review Mr.



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Shattan claims to regret "the sort of rhetorical trick one [does not] expect to find in a work of serious historical scholarship." His review is full of tricks that are not so much rhetorical as they are Shattanic.

JOHN LUKACS
Phoenixville, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Joseph Shattan's . . . review seems . . . to leave the impression that John Lukacs is anti-Semitic and that his anti-Semitism has infected his historical judgment.

In *The Last European War* Mr. Lukacs argues that Hitler probably did not finally make up his mind to kill the Jews, rather than merely to drive them out of Europe, until after Pearl Harbor. According to Mr. Shattan, however, Mr. Lukacs ignores the "fact," which is "abundantly documented," that there was "no causal connection whatever between Pearl Harbor and Auschwitz," although "it is impossible to believe" that he is ignorant of this "fact." In other words, according to Mr. Shattan, Mr. Lukacs deliberately hides from the reader a fact of which he is personally aware. . . .

Mr. Shattan also notes that Mr. Lukacs makes some uncomplimentary remarks about particular Jews. Indeed he does. But the individuals mentioned richly deserve his judgment, nor does he reserve his uncomplimentary remarks for Jews alone.

Mr. Shattan criticizes Mr. Lukacs's conclusion that but for the Holocaust many people (including himself) would have rated the Nazi regime less horrible than the Communist regime in Russia under Stalin. But if this conclusion has any bearing on anti- or pro-Semitism at all, it has to be pro-Semitic. Mr. Lukacs is saying that the Holocaust was *so* horrible that it alone tipped the scales of judgment against Nazism in favor of Communism under Stalin.

It seems to us that Mr. Lukacs is being accused of the unpardonable sin of writing anything remotely negative about anyone who was a Jew and anything remotely positive about Hitler, even if such things are true. Mr. Lukacs often voices unpopular or unvoguish views, but this should not detract from his clear moral outrage at and total condemnation of Hitler's actions. We found nothing anti-Semitic in Mr. Lukacs's book, even though we are sensitive to such undertones. . . *The Last European War* is, in our opinion, excellent and entertaining history and we hope others will read it and decide on its merits for themselves.

W. DAVID SLAWSON
STEPHEN J. MORSE
Los Angeles, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his review . . . Joseph Shattan quarrels with John Lukacs over whether the Right or Left first resisted Hitler. This approaches the ultimate in futility. In the wretched decade preceding World War II all political groups vied with each other in stupidity. The Nazi regime was genuinely popular in Germany in the 30's and there was no serious plotting against Hitler until the summer of 1944. Germans of all political persuasions were still fighting doggedly for the regime in the streets of Berlin in the spring of 1945. Did the Italians fight thus for Mussolini or the French for the Third Republic?

In Britain, Chamberlain and his supporters were notoriously bemused by Hitler, while the Labour party virtuously denounced the Nazis and then voted against arms appropriations. In France, elements on the Right proclaimed their preference for Hitler over Léon Blum, while the Left staged sitdown strikes that interfered with rearmament. The general public in both countries remembered only the frightful casualty lists of World War I and simply refused to contemplate the possibility of another war.

In the United States, neutrality legislation was enacted by huge bipartisan congressional majorities. . . . Both Republicans and Democrats were prominent in the America First movement. Congress retained conscription by a single vote, only four months before Pearl Harbor.

All over the Western world Communists fulminated against fascism until the Hitler-Stalin Pact of August 23, 1939. Then they abruptly became the world's foremost appeasers of Hitler until the Germans invaded Russia on June 22, 1941. Immediately they turned 180 degrees again and became uncompromising champions of "democracy."

Save for a few prescient individuals like Winston Churchill, nobody, Right, Left, or Center, can look back on the 30's with pride.

Comparisons with 1976 are obvious and are, for that reason, unwelcome among all who sympathize

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with the new predatory state, hate their own societies, or merely dislike being disturbed.

BERNARD NORLING
University of Notre Dame
Notre Dame, Indiana

JOSEPH SHATTAN writes:

In my review, I made two points. First of all, I explained that, according to John Lukacs, Hitler's decision to exterminate European Jewry was a reaction to what he regarded as an intolerable provocation on the part of American Jews, a way of punishing them for their warmongering. This reading, I argued, was tendentious, and I backed up my argument with a number of well-known facts, some of which Mr. Lukacs himself had cited. For reasons unknown, Mr. Lukacs has not deigned even to respond to my criticism.

My second point concerned Mr. Lukacs's attitudes toward Jews, attitudes which, I wrote, "are disturbing, to say the least."

Once again Mr. Lukacs has not seen fit to respond to my criticism. All he says is that he pointed out that Otto Weininger's views were wrong. But what he actually wrote was that while Weininger was "probably right" in foreseeing the rise of a tremendous movement of anti-Semitism in reaction to "a new and godless breed among the Jews of Europe," he was "wrong" in attributing this expected outbreak of anti-Semitism to a new, rising Christianity. And although he quoted a lengthy passage from Weininger's "extraordinary book," *Sex and Character* (the Nazis also found the book extraordinary), nowhere did Mr. Lukacs indicate that Weininger's appalling diagnosis of Jewish depravity was in any way inaccurate. At best, Mr. Lukacs disagreed with Weininger's prognosis.

Mr. Lukacs informs us that his study of the last European war has led him to conclusions not generally accepted by his liberal and radical colleagues, and he lists some of them. He goes on to say that I find these conclusions objectionable. I do not. On the contrary, the points he makes in his letter are well-established, and if his liberal or radical colleagues object, so much the worse for them. What I object to are: his dubious "discovery" that American Jews, by their incessant anti-Hitler agitation, provoked the Holocaust; his assertion that "unscrupulous scum of the type of a Stavisky or Ilya Ehrenburg" floated on the surface of Jewish society; his implication that Europe's best Jews were powerfully attracted to Christianity. These are conclusions which Mr. Lukacs's liberal, radical, and conservative colleagues might well object to, and with good reason, since they are wrong. Moreover, they are defamatory.

Apparently, W. David Slawson and Stephen J. Morse do not understand the difference between self-contradiction and deliberate dissimulation. The former does not imply the latter. Far from insinuating that Mr. Lukacs was deliberately withholding facts from the reader, I argued that the very facts he cited contradicted his case.

Messrs. Slawson and Morse claim that Mr. Lukacs's disparaging remarks about "particular Jews" were "richly deserved," and suggest that there was no wider purpose to his remarks than excoriating the wicked. I am not at all sure whether either Stavisky or Ehrenburg richly deserves being called "scum," but that is not the point. Rather, Mr. Lukacs uses Stavisky and Ehrenburg as illustrations of standard Jewish "types"—the unscrupulous financier and the Bolshevik intellectual—to make a wider point about Jewish society and Jewish-Christian relations, namely, that these notorious Jewish "types" were prevalent enough to induce the best Jews to convert to Christianity. I find this view most disturbing, and given their professed "sensitivity" to anti-Semitic undertones, I am surprised Messrs. Slawson and Morse do not.

Their summary of Mr. Lukacs's views on the Hitler versus Stalin question, however, is accurate: it was only the Holocaust which convinced Mr. Lukacs that Hitler was more evil than Stalin. (Curiously enough, in his letter, Mr. Lukacs denies ever saying this.) But, as I pointed out in my review, this involves Mr. Lukacs in a serious inconsistency. If Hitler became the greater evil only after embarking on the Final Solution—but *not* before—then Chamberlain's appeasement policy, far from being contemptible, was actually praiseworthy. By trying to convert Hitler to a respectable variety of anti-Communism, he was, according to this reading, simply choosing the lesser evil. Yet even as he makes the case for appeasement, Mr. Lukacs also makes it clear that his sympathies are with Churchill rather than Chamberlain. It was this contradiction that I drew attention to in my review—though, once again, Messrs. Slawson and Morse appear not to have noticed it.

So far as I can tell, Bernard Norling and I are in agreement. Neither the Right nor the Left had a monopoly on stupidity in the 30's, and it was not my intention to apportion blame for the debacle. Since Mr. Lukacs made the argument that the earliest opponents of the Hitler regime came solely from the aristocratic and conservative Right, I felt called upon to point out that in 1933 the German Social Democrats made a solitary stand against Hitler, and that some of them paid with their lives for their courage. Of course, this certainly does not prove that the Left, in general, was any more perceptive than the Right in reacting to the Nazi menace.

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On Returning to Religion

William Barrett

Everything that exists participates in a religious essence. —E.M. Cioran

WHAT do I believe? As a philosopher, I would seem especially equipped to give an answer here, and yet my profession may be just the thing that screens me off from the human intent that lies behind the question. A philosopher may be able to reel off his ideas by the yard and yet remain blind to the things that really keep him going in life. What, then, do I live by?—that is the question, and in its grip every one of us stands on the same ground, forced to be truthful about himself and face the day that opens before him. Looking back, what fragments have I saved out of my life to shore up its meaning? What rituals, charms, incantations, or loves help me forward? In the end these may be more real to us than any of our imposing and grandiose ideas.

Time itself forces the question upon you. Whatever your temperament, you reach that stage of life where you are compelled to think of death more insistently. In his novel, *A Passage to India*, E. M. Forster tells us of an old lady, Mrs. Moore, who has suddenly fallen into the abyss of nihilism:

> She had come to that state where the horror of the universe and its smallness are both visible at the same time—the twilight of the double vision in which so many elderly people are involved.

I am yet far from being there; the lusts and rages of the living still dance their attendance upon me. I tell myself I shall never be there, that I shall see more in the universe than smallness and horror, whatever the failure of my body. But this confidence too may be but another illusion that time will strip away like so many others. Meanwhile I note that a few older friends have unexpectedly died, and I begin to be aware of death stalking all of us, to gather us together into *our* generation. The future that opens before me no longer seems boundless, and the horizons within which I move seem more closed than they were.

Freedom no longer spreads its gorgeous array of alternatives before me. If I assert that freedom now, it is but to affirm the narrow corridors within which my life will henceforth run. The rails have been laid down, the train will move in its appointed direction—more or less. At any rate, the rails cannot be ripped up at this late date, and a new line laid out, for me to strike out toward another quarter of the compass. Yet the idea of freedom becomes more central to me than ever. This freedom embraces the monotony of existence to which I henceforth condemn myself. "The galley slave sticks to his oars," says Samuel Beckett. It is precisely there where its conditions are minimal that the significance of freedom becomes maximal. Freedom emerges as the zest that transfigures what might look to the external glance like mere monotony. You rise each morning to the gift of life as if this day were a new beginning.

A far cry indeed from Forster's frightful words about his elderly character. Yet I am forced to keep Mrs. Moore and her condition in mind. What happens to her is something very dreadful, for which as readers we are not quite prepared. She comes upon us as an entirely sympathetic person, enlightened and wise, with a religious sensitivity left as the residue of Christian faith. Yet it is not strong enough to withstand the shock of India, the heat, the weariness of old age, and the tedious troubles of the young over which she is supposed to preside. In his discreet and quiet way Forster is nevertheless a "modern"—he sounds the typically modern note of desperation. Two centuries ago, a century ago, men thought of themselves as the masters of history; today we are more likely to think of ourselves as its victims. The literature of the 20th century is largely a lamentation for ourselves as victims. And in nothing are we more victims than in this: that we have to cope with the same life as humankind in the past but without its most potent means of doing so. We cannot will back a faith that has been lost. We shall have to live back into that way of being in whose ambience the religious once drew breath. We shall have to find ourselves within nature before God is able to find us.

There, in any case, my own *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, the journey toward God, has already begun.

WILLIAM BARRETT is professor of philosophy at New York University. His most recent book, which looks at the religious aspects of modern literature, is *Time of Need*.

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2.

"NATURE is in tatters," Merleau-Ponty once remarked to Sartre. The remark occurred during a conversation in the days before their friendship was broken, as happened so often between Sartre and his peers. Sartre himself reports the incident, and he tells us that Merleau-Ponty was quoting Whitehead. The remark sticks in one's mind, particularly as coming from Sartre. It is strange to hear him mention the name of Whitehead, whose thinking belongs to another region of discourse from his own; strange even to hear him mention nature at all since it plays so little part in his thought. Merleau-Ponty, however, was traveling a different road. He had discovered in the painting of Cézanne the stubborn struggle to stand within the presence of the earth. Seeking his own philosophic footing there, he was curious enough to explore Whitehead and be caught by the latter's observation of the "tatters"—the fragmentation—to which the philosophy of the last three centuries had reduced nature. Quite characteristically, Sartre merely notes his former friend's remark in passing, but does not pause to comment or reflect on it. It does not seem to trouble his thinking at all.

To be fair to him, he is not untypical here. The idea of nature has played a small part in contemporary philosophy. Bergson once remarked that most philosophers seem to philosophize as if they were sealed in the privacy of their study and did not live on a planet surrounded by the vast organic world of animals, plants, insects, and protozoa, with whom their own life is linked in a single history. Indeed, only two major philosophers of the century, Bergson and Whitehead, have taken the idea of nature as their central theme; and both are largely unappreciated today. Bergson is almost a forgotten name; Whitehead was never taken up by the English after he had left them to settle in America; and among the younger generation of American philosophers, he remains almost unread.

Bergson and Whitehead provide certain nuclear images of nature against which one's thinking about freedom must proceed. It is a great mistake to forget the role of imagination in supplying the background against which all thinking, however abstract, must find its place and meaning. Human freedom may be unique in the ways in which it becomes manifest, but it does have its roots in nature, and we have to be able to imagine the cosmos in a fashion that is congruent with that freedom.

Bergson, for example, invites us to see ourselves and our human questions against the background of the evolution of life on this planet. The earth, according to some recent estimates, is five billion years old. Its history, however, is a chapter in the life of our sun, a small star, paying out its energy into space during all that time. According to the law of thermodynamics, as energy is radiated out into space it spreads itself out more thinly until finally the whole universe reaches the same dead level. This is the famous heat death of the universe that stood like a solemn *memento mori* inscribed over the intellectual portals of the end of the 19th century. It was a somber perspective to fit the mechanistic and pessimistic mood of the time, and not a few literary imaginations were shaken by it.

Against this picture of cosmic death Bergson raises the complementary image of life. During the five billion years our sun has been dissipating its energy in space, slowly burning itself out, life has appeared and managed to survive on this earth. And not merely survived at some marginal and inertial level, but rushed onward into ever higher and more varied forms. One estimate by biologists that I have seen numbers five billion organic species on this earth. Allowing for those forms of life that may have appeared or vanished, we might have to set the number much higher. No matter. For convenience and symmetry, let us say five billion species in five billion years. A species a year. A stupendous effort of creation, in which we are a part. If the universe exhibits processes of running down, it also contains those of building up. While our sun has been dissipating itself into space, in a contrary process this energy has been collected, stored, and gathered into higher and more complex levels of life, until, with the advent of man, life gives energy back to nature in the manner of its own source. Our nuclear devices create energy out of matter in imitation of the sun itself.

Is this merely an optimistic picture to be set against the 19th century's prospect of the universal heat death? The obsession with optimism and pessimism is like the bad habit of a reader who skims the book to find out how it comes out in the end. It is the drama from page to page that we have to live. Whether, untold millennia hence, the outcome will be dismal or happy will not get you through your day any better. But the image of life building itself up, stubbornly, lavishly, and recklessly, out of fragments of dissipated energy from the sun can make a difference to us here and now because it conveys the spectacular process of which we are a part and whose dynamism we share. In the light of this image we cease to think of our own life as a mechanical iteration of what has been. Life, any life, no matter how tiny, appears then as a more miraculous event than any mechanism can imagine.

Whitehead does not dwell on the sheer fact of life's evolution on this planet. Yet his single notion of "organism" is more radical and sweeping in restoring to us a live rather than dead universe. For the last three centuries, since Descartes, we have been in the grip of a metaphysics of death that Whitehead calls "scientific materialism." We understand the phenomena of life only as an as-

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semblage of the lifeless. The mechanical and routine are taken as the underlying reality of nature. We take the abstractions of our technical calculation to be ultimately concrete. Beneath our preoccupation with technique and apparatus there is the prevalent metaphysical disposition to see things ultimately resolved into bits of brute matter pervading space, "in a flux of configurations, senseless, valueless, purposeless."

Suppose, however, we were to invert this whole scheme; reverse the order in which it assigns abstract and concrete. What is central to our experience, then, need not be peripheral to nature. This sunset now, for example, caught within the network of bare winter branches, seems like a moment of benediction in which the whole of nature collaborates. Why should not these colors and these charging banners of light be as much a part of the universe as the atoms and molecules that make them up? If they were only "in my mind," then I and my mind would no longer be a part of nature. Why should the pulse of life toward beauty and value not be a part of things? Following this path, we do not vainly seek to assemble the living out of configurations of dead stuff, but we descend downward from more complex to simpler grades of the organic. From humans to trees to rocks; from "higher-grade" to "lower-grade" organisms. In the universe of energy, any individual thing is a pattern of activity within the flux, and thereby an organism at some level.

3.

Rocks and trees. I have grown to know them particularly this winter; they have accompanied me on my walks, or rather I have learned to enter into their company. Winter trees are more beautiful than under the fat and heavy foliage of summer. Now they lay bare their secret structure, the naked and living line of branch and bough, the supple harshness of their enduring struggle with the elements. Oak, maple, ash, chestnut, beech—these are now without their telltale leaves, and I have had to learn to read them by their barks, each as individual as fingerprints. With some I have come to know the particular curves and twists of their branches like the individual features of friends.

The rocks are no less individuals. Whoever thinks matter is mere inert stuff has not looked long at rocks. They do not lie inert, they thrust forward, or crouch back in quiet self-gathered power. Like a cat sitting so still that his tail has ceased twitching. Only Cézanne, among artists, did rocks properly, painting them into the canvas as alive as the trees against which he sets them. In the gray light of winter they come alive in their color too—smoke-gray or blue-gray, molded and subtle in their shading that shifts as the gray light shifts. The living rock! More than an idle phrase. Out of the living rock the waters of spirit.

For the moment I have passed outside the world of man. Yet I am in no remote wilderness. This is only a strip of woods stretching for several miles along the Hudson; yet at the times I walk there I am able to be alone—at least from other humans. The broad river, glimpsed now and then through the lattice of boughs, and an occasional gull riding high and motionless on the furrows of the air—these are enough for background. For the rest, I am content to be in the company of trees and stones. Usually it takes a mile to begin to be free. The important thing is to find freedom in the movement of your body first, let the mind be what it will. By the second mile I am set free in the body, the havoc of the mind and the idiocy of its ideas recede. I am no longer homeless. I am there. The trees are there too, and the rocks; I have come into this stringent but secretly lavish life of winter.

Even about a fallen and dead tree there is something noble. That great oak over there, which was rooted in too shallow a lip of soil, was blown down last fall, and its dirt-browned roots gouged out a great hole in the earth. It lies now with the nobility of some dead king in the dignity of its death. I touch one of the roots as reverently as if it were a bier. Animal life, by superficial contrast so much more vivid, is more degraded and ignoble in death. Not long ago I stumbled on a dead raccoon in the bushes: this little animal, so pretty and captivating in life, had turned into an ugly carcass that stank disgustingly. Nature's law of opposites is at work here too: the more nervous and mobile in life, the more squalid and abject in death. A rotting tree reenters the scheme of things more unobtrusively and with greater dignity.

I can understand why earlier mankind could worship trees. Perhaps I already do so myself. My ancestors were Druids, after all, and perhaps I am only rounding out the cycle by returning to their fold. Certainly, the more I learn of the biology of trees the more I am moved to awe and wonder. I am delighted to think of the intricate means by which that tall ash there draws water from the soil and lifts it to its topmost branches more than 70 feet in the air. The tiny cells of the xylem live only a few seconds because they are of no use while alive, but dead they form little hollow tubes to suck the water up by capillary action. They live only to die, and they die for the greater life. Steadfast striving, effortless effort.

Nature worship! Mysticism! The tags are ready that would consign one's experience to an old banality. We are a culture consumed by verbalism, and the effect of our words is to place a screen between us and things. Nothing exists until we have assigned it its name; and then, once named, its life becomes that of a word that begets more words in endless argument, debate, sophistry. Here among my rocks and trees I have passed beyond the needs of such labels. That does not mean that my mind has become some kind of nameless and inchoate

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blur. On the contrary, mind and eye are alert to read the texture of bark or the shape of a stone. I told a friend, who wondered why I spent so much time in these woods, that I was no different from a boy scout brushing up on his woodlore. My friend demurred; he would have liked me to use the word "mysticism." We forget that what we call mysticism was once a natural condition of mankind, and could be again if we let ourselves enter it. The mysticism that matters is one that has no need of the word. The same with Being. Another word. We are most within Being when we do not use the word and have ceased to grapple with its idea. These words are notations at a distance for something that up close does not require them.

What I have just written may be only one more expression of the classic doctrine of "No Mind" in Zen Buddhism. One has to pass beyond the prison of concepts to be directly and fully there, wherever one is. Twenty years ago, in a book in collaboration with the late D.T. Suzuki, I played a small part in introducing Zen to this country, and I have not always been happy with the results. American youth acquired another vocabulary to throw around. The "mindlessness" that Zen recommended was pursued by the young in the haze of marijuana and drugs. They forgot, if they had ever learned, the prosaic and magnificent saying of the sage Hui-Neng: "The Tao [the truth] is your ordinary mind." In recent years I have let myself forget all about Zen, and probably have been nearer to its spirit. Stick to your ordinary mind, reader, and forget the tags. Find your own rocks and trees.

4.

But is it not mere self-indulgence to prattle on thus about a walk in the woods? How can I draw any philosophical lessons from what, as I myself insist, cannot be put into words?

Still, the question of the will, of avoiding the dreaded collapse into nihilism, involves every resource of the spirit that may help us. If I could not draw my breath in this stretch of woods, could not stand in this open clearing, I feel the balance of my sanity would be less steady for the tasks life imposes. In the end, the question of motivation is the crucial one. If I could not draw sustenance here, the strength of my motives for other things would certainly wither.

For philosophic sanction, though it is not needed, we might turn to Kant. In his old age, in the last of his three great works, *The Critique of Judgment*, Kant proceeded to develop a view of man in his concrete and sensuous relation to nature. Hegel and Schelling, otherwise sharp critics, hailed this as the greatest of the three great critiques. Their judgment is not to be taken lightly; they were the next generation, and closer to Kant's questions than the later tight-lipped Neo-Kantians who sought to force him into the strait jacket of epistemology. In this last work, in fact, Kant advances to meet the problem that had been waiting in the wings for him. He had dealt with man as a skeleton—an abstract knower, and an abstract moral agent—but now he must deal with him as a creature of the senses in his immediate perceptions of nature. Here the freedom of man must be encountered, not as an abstract moral postulate, but in his concrete being within nature. In the experience of the Sublime and the Beautiful, Kant tells us, we experience an unknown and unknowable harmony between ourselves and the nature we behold. No particular item within our perception can account for the depth surrounding that perception. What vibrates through it points to something beyond it that we can never grasp as a particular item of fact within it. There is a resonance that is sounded between the unknown depth in the self and the unknowable depth in the nature of things. Deep calls to deep. Here the distress of alienation ends. We are at home in a mystery which suggests some meaning of which we are a part, though we cannot know it in any precise conceptual way. And given any kind of meaning, we are thus given one more motive to sustain us in our solitary journey as mortal beings through this world. Thus, in the end Kant comes back to himself as a moralist. The sublimity and beauty of nature are the sensory symbols of our high moral destiny.

It is as good a statement of the unstatable as any ever made. Yet no better than any of the others. We end, in any case, in the dumb and inarticulate presence from which Kant starts. That is the truth more important than any of the attempts to express it. We would be mistaken if we thought that Kant was merely developing some intellectual inference from the ideas of the sublime and the beautiful. He is merely fumbling, like any other mortal, though in the more elaborate and formal fashion of his philosophy, to give words to that wordless feeling that is ours in the presence of nature.

In fact, the ideas of the sublime and the beautiful are a makeshift that we learn to dispense with. They are our human perspectives; and if we stick too tightly within them, we are likely to stand in an "aesthetic" detachment from nature. That is why no photograph, however impressive, can have the power over us of our actual presence within a natural scene. The closer one comes to nature the less one seeks to dichotomize beauty and ugliness. That great ash over there, with its enormous bole more than fifteen feet around, seemed comely and beautiful under the drapery of summer. When it shed its leaves, I laughed to discover its upper boughs emerge as squat and homely. But if I stand now under it and look up, the great rippling torso soars over me with the muscular grace of a dancer; and I smile apologetically at having judged it ugly. As our perspectives change, beautiful and ugly shift with them. In time one learns not to

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pick apart beauty from the whole. Everywhere, in my wintry mood, I find beauty mingled with the harsh and painful. I remember the stabbing vision of a swan in the river at Zurich, at night under the cold and falling rain, asleep, rocked in the rippling water, its long neck folded back on its body. I cannot, even now, remember a more beautiful sight; yet it was also an image of anguish, cradled there on the cold swell. One cannot remain within the detachment of the aesthetic even here. These trees and rocks are companions with me in suffering.

Kant, trembling in the presence of the nature that enveloped him, was too quick to find in it the confirmation of his moral sensibilities. The romantics who followed him persisted in this humanistic framework. The landscape they loved gave them back their human image. So Wordsworth sings all too patly:

> One impulse from a vernal wood
> Can teach us more of moral evil and of good. . . .

Trees and rocks do not indulge in the impertinence of foisting lessons upon us. Their method of instruction is more circuitous and indirect, but perhaps all the more potent for that. Their first lesson is to draw us outside the narrow and presumptuous horizons of our humanism. They help restore the balance of our sanity without which we would be less free for the moral tasks required of us.

And then, suddenly, last week they had put up a fence that shuts off the far part of my walk! Today I've found a way to get around the fence, and so for the time being I am at peace again.

But not entirely. It is the next fence after this that I fear—and the fence after that. I dream of that last fence that humans will someday erect to seal themselves effectively from any world beyond man. The triumph of "humanism" at last! It is then that we may have most to fear about the human future. The species might go mad, or slide listlessly into the empty nihilism of science fiction.

5.

One reenters the human world nonetheless. There I have the usual quota of attachments, with its accompanying complement of loves, rages, and disillusions. I do not pursue detachment. Even if it were possible, it would be empty; and it is in fact impossible. The marvelous images from Taoism and Zen Buddhism, which seduce us into the quietude of Being, cannot be a permanent halting place for the Westerner. Between myself and them are interposed the Bible and the Russian novel, from whose grip I can never free myself.

As soon as we are born we are hurled into the question of first and last things. The secret of the Russian writers is that their characters are plunged irremediably into these questions, even in their most trifling actions. The shabby and frivolous characters of Gogol would not loom as monumental as Shakespeare's without that religious mania that eats away at their author. In the end, that religious obsession destroyed Gogol as an artist, but without it he could not have written as incomparably as he did. That is but another paradox of creation—and, we might add, of freedom.

As soon as we are born we breathe the air of a religion: we are alive, and so we must die. Amid all the definitions proposed for man the most truthful would in fact be that he is the religious animal. He created religions long before the Greeks created reason. And now that he lives at last in the world of science and the computer, new religions sprout all over the map. It would be folly to think that this religious part of him was an accidental excrescence terminated by the French Revolution. The fanaticism of subsequent history has shown that mankind simply displaced its religious passions into the world; and the results have been more terrifying than any religious inquisition.

A secular-minded psychoanalysis now encounters everywhere among its patients a sense of meaninglessness against which it is helpless. Religion may very well be an illusion, as Freud said, but then man himself is that illusion. It is the human animal, no one else, that is displayed in the history of his religions. Their evils and excesses are his, as much as whatever is poignant and sublime in that history. The frenzies of asceticism, which may seem mere aberration and abnormality to our secular minds, are in fact the inevitable means to which the human animal is driven to give meaning to his existence. Rather than be meaningless, we shall find ourselves seeking out devices of our own that are equally extreme. We create by denying ourselves. So long as we drive ourselves in the toils of some discipline we cannot believe that our life is meaningless. In the tensions of the will—the simultaneous striving and surrender—the ghost of nihilism departs.

According to the old platitude, the most important thing a landlady should know about a prospective tenant is his philosophy. The most important—perhaps as a matter of social utility; but hardly the deepest. A philosophy is only that part of ourselves that we can articulate before the public. The deepest part of any of us is our religion—that uncertain center of yearning, acceptance and rebellion, simultaneous despair and aspiration—out of which anything philosophically vital comes. When that center has not been touched, the philosophy rings hollow.

As I enter my garret of a study each day I intone the words: *"Ha'ira einai pen ishan ha-mavet."* Do not ask me what they mean. They are in Hebrew, a language which I do not understand. They are from the Psalms. I heard them once, I had forgotten them, but they come back to me now. I am told they ask that we sleep not the sleep of death.

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I say them because they keep me from thinking. I have become part of an invisible church of one. I am ready to accept whatever rituals or charms that can now sustain and quicken me within this mystery that is given me to live. "Stupefy yourself, take holy water," Pascal said. His injunction no longer seems outrageous to me. We will do the equivalent in any case so long as we continue to live. And some of our means may not be so harmless. Imagine a Communist—there must be one somewhere—who is afflicted with doubts. I see him at that moment when the thought crosses his mind that the whole idea that governs his life may be a ghastly mistake, that even in the mundane matter of economic efficiency the system shows itself to be bungling and inept. Yet for this single idea the whole of mankind and its future may have to be sacrificed. He sits dumbfounded for a moment, then shakes himself as he rushes for his own stoup of holy water; and the doubts recede as he plunges into party discipline and party demonstrations.

WE ARE all members of an invisible church of one—and everyone. On the stairway, in the half-dark, I encounter the great yearning eyes of my dog. She looks at me as if aggrieved that I no longer take her on my walks. She is too old and the distance tires her too much. She is aging rapidly and will soon be dead, and I shall lose the companionship of those eyes. I should like to tell her that I shall not forget her. We share the fact of mortality—it looks at me now out of her eyes—but we cannot share it in speech. That is the unique gift that humans have above all the other animals: they can share their death with each other. The fundamental cult in all religions is the funeral rite. Gathered together in its observance, we can say *"Ha'ira einai pen ishan ha-mavet"*—with whatever ritual gesture we wish—not so much over the dead as over ourselves, the living, in compassion for one another. And thereby begin to live.

The psychiatrist Harry Stack Sullivan once had a patient who constantly threatened to commit suicide. One day, after one of these tirades, the analyst asked very softly, "Why don't you?" The patient, caught short, was suddenly speechless. Thereafter (so the anecdote goes) he ceased the threats against his own life. Once you have been put to the challenge and recoiled you have made the great act of faith. You have made the primary affirmation beyond which any verbal eulogy of life is pallid.

It would be a good spiritual exercise for each of us to enact this situation for ourselves. We are then both patient and analyst, and put Sullivan's question to ourself. (It is wiser to practice this exercise, though, when we are calm of mind; it will build our strength against the moments of panic that come our way.) We let the mind have a free hand and range as it will. It will show me that my reasons for living are mere pretexts: that my pleasures are mediocre, my talents uncertain, and my virtues negligible. But even as I let the mind range and devour my substance, something stronger than reason takes over. If I project this paltry life of mine against the possibility of not being at all, then this gift of Being floods through me like a tide. To exist at all is to be happy. Dostoevsky, in his startling and unpredictable way, chose to put his supreme truth in the mouth of the half-crazed Kirillov: "We are all happy if we but knew it." Against the void of nonexistence, any fragment of existence, however paltry, becomes a supreme miracle. My God, I am happy! This freedom as galley slave here in this garret is inexhaustible.

So each day I pass judgment and sentence myself to remain among the living. Condemned to live, I must then ceaselessly create reasons for living. The judgment is not so severe, nor the task so difficult, as we imagine. We have only to be open to the world and it will pour its riches at our feet. Before this winter I had not known that the bark of a tree, caught in yellow sunlight, could be enough to restore a life.

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Is Democracy Doomed?

Elie Kedourie

IN THE course of the last few years the intellectual classes of the West have been giving voice to doom-laden prophecies about Western civilization, lamenting (or rejoicing at) the decay of "capitalism," denouncing (somberly or gleefully, as the case may be) the weakness and corruption of "democratic" government. Such warnings have not been confined to publicists and commentators. They have also figured in the writings of novelists primarily interested not in public distempers but in private confusions and intimate disasters. Thus, in a recent novel, *Au delà de cette limite votre ticket n'est plus valable* ("Ticket not valid beyond this point"), Romain Gary draws the picture of an aging man of affairs who finds himself the victim of business and sexual worries. The hero's intimate crisis is presented as the analogue and reverberation of the crisis of the Western economy, touched off and made manifest by the oil embargo and the great increase in oil prices following the Arab-Israeli war of October 1973. Another recent novel, Muriel Spark's *The Takeover,* dealing with the affairs of a very rich woman and the various crooks who cheat her, presents the oil crisis of 1973 as a climacteric in the life of the West: "a complete mutation not merely to be defined as a collapse of the capitalist system, or a global recession, but such a sea-change in the nature of reality as could not have been envisaged by Karl Marx or Sigmund Freud."

To judge by these two examples, public events in the early 70's, through some ominous quality they are thought to possess, have conjured up a threat not only to a society and a way of life, but also to the very core of being, a threat which imaginative and intelligent writers have tried to convey through the medium of their fictions. What these events are is not in doubt: not only the Arab-Israeli war and the oil embargo, but also Watergate; the *coup d'état* in Portugal which bade fair to result in a Communist regime in Lisbon, and which did in fact hand over Mozambique and Angola to clients of the Soviets; Britain in the throes of an inflation which looked as though it was being deliberately used to destroy a society hitherto stable, prosperous, and well-governed; the pitiful debacle in Vietnam; and the horror in Cambodia. Truly, it seemed, in these last few years, as though it were "closing time in the gardens of the West."

The particular expression of despondency I have just quoted, however, was not elicited by the disasters of the early 70's but was rather a reaction to earlier disasters, those of the 30's and of World War II. Its author, Cyril Connolly, was oppressed with the decadence and futility of Western society, which greed and philistinism were destroying. Indeed, a defeatist mood, we may suspect, was then, and is now, justified and made plausible not only by public events which are catastrophic enough, but also by the widely prevalent theory that the crisis of "capitalism" is at hand, that the system is a gigantic "self-destruct" mechanism which finally has to explode.

It is worth recalling that the earlier prophecies derived their plausibility from the terribly attractive simplifications of a Marxist doctrine which offered one grand and unique explanation for a large number of disparate phenomena. May the similar forebodings of the 70's ultimately have for their basis the same doctrine, which today more than ever is without serious rival as the opium of Western intellectuals?

The catastrophes which have befallen Western interests in the early 70's—the oil cartel and the ruinous rise in oil prices, the debacles in Vietnam and Angola, the government-manufactured inflations—may, of course, precipitate other catastrophes, and may in the end prove mortal. But whatever the outcome, these misfortunes are by no means linked to one another, and cannot by any stretch of the imagination be seen to exemplify the "contradictions" or the "crisis" of "capitalism." Thus, the Arab-Israeli war of 1973 was one in a series of wars which began in 1948. The oil cartel and the rise in oil prices were the outcome of geography, of increased demand for oil (which betokens prosperity rather than crisis), of improvident energy policies in Western countries, and of pusillanimity in negotiation with the oil states since at least 1970. The young Portuguese officers who carried out the *coup d'état* of April 1974 may themselves—as Marxists—have believed in the "crisis

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of capitalism," but it is clear that neither Portugal nor its colonies was in the throes of such a "crisis"; in the colonies guerrillas armed and trained by Communist powers and harbored by African states forced the Portuguese government to commit resources and troops in long-drawn-out hostilities, and this resulted in the politicization and radicalization of army officers.*

To mention these events and their attendant circumstances is immediately to see how disparate they are, and how useless to explain them are these ominous general causes, which yet engender forebodings of dissolution and disaster. For deceptive as they are,

> all these are usual
> Pastimes and drugs and features of the press:
> And always will be, some of them especially
> When there is distress of nations and perplexity
> Whether on the shores of Asia, or in the Edgware Road.

"FEATURES of the press," indeed. For the latest example we may turn to a long "conversation" with George F. Kennan which appears in the September *Encounter* (the conversation, conducted by George Urban, bears the title "From Containment . . . to Self-Containment"). Kennan, it is true, seems quite innocent of the Marxism which, at whatever remove and however indirectly, ultimately dictates the belief that "capitalism" has reached a stage in the West which must end in political collapse. But his arguments reveal the same grandiose ambition to conjoin social trends and political calculations. Thus, Kennan says that he does not "think that the United States civilization of these last 40-50 years is a successful civilization." He is increasingly "persuaded that the Industrial Revolution itself was the source of most of the bewilderments and failures of this modern age." The West is "honeycombed with bewilderment and a profound sense of internal decay." America has nothing to teach the world, and "[we] must confess that we have not got the answers to the problems of human society in the modern age."

It is, of course, possible that these sweeping statements are, all of them, true. What is by no means clear is why they should be thought to require the political conclusions which Kennan proceeds to draw from them. There is, he asserts, "very little merit in organizing ourselves to defend from the Russians the porno shops in central Washington," and it is "grotesque" to spend so much energy to save a decaying and bewildered West from Russian domination. Again, Kennan affirms, an "absolutely certain ecological and demographic disaster is going to overtake this planet within the next, I would say, 60-70 years," and compared with this inevitable death sentence Soviet control over Western Europe would be only "a minor catastrophe." Perhaps not even that:

> A couple of years ago, in the course of our usual summer cruise in the Baltic, my family and I put in at a small Danish port which was having a youth festival. The place was swarming with hippies—motorbikes, girlfriends, drugs, pornography, drunkenness, noise—it was all there. I looked at this mob and thought how one company of robust Russian infantry would drive it out of town.

Let us suppose that mankind *is* doomed to perish in some remote or near future. May a country base its present policy toward a rival, and a potential enemy, on such remote and misty speculations? Is Soviet society innocent of industrialism? Why are these exhortations addressed to the United States alone? Will not the calamity affect all mankind? And if all states become convinced that universal disaster is in the offing, can Kennan be sure that discord will then be stilled, and wars banished? The "absolutely certain" disaster he foresees has to do with demography and ecology—that is, population, and resources and their exploitation. May it not occur to the rulers of some state to exterminate all the inhabitants of a set of rival states, and thus at one stroke obtain easement from military, and demographic, and ecological threat? For, after all, there are in the world today states for whose rulers thinking about nuclear warfare is not, automatically, to think the unthinkable. Or consider the hippies, the hideous hippies whom Kennan met on his Baltic cruise. One cannot possibly doubt that, as he says, "one company of robust Russian infantry" would know how to deal with them. But before one's mind lie the opulent and sophisticated societies of which these hippies are the dregs, the rude products of luxury—to use an expression of Hegel's: what, one cannot help wondering, would the robust Russian infantry do to *them*, in the process of driving the hippies out of town? (Fears of this kind Kennan dismisses as unrealistic, because the Russians "can't run an agricultural system that really works" and "can't adequately house their population." Similar shortcomings, we may remember, afflicted the early Arab conquerors, Ghengis Khan, and Attila.)

It is evident from Kennan's language that he thinks there is a straightforward connection between worth and power. America, he tells us, has "nothing to teach the world"—hence his advocacy of "a gradual and qualified withdrawal from far-flung foreign involvements." And this simple moralism is reinforced by the belief in an unproblematic relation between society and politics, between, for example, the state of Soviet housing and Soviet readiness for war; or between the preval-

* Such an outcome, we may add, is by no means inevitable, for the Algerian war fostered in the French army attitudes at the very opposite of those found among the Portuguese officers: the army which brought de Gaulle to power in May 1958 was vehemently opposed to a surrender in Algeria such as their hero, only four years later, was to engineer.

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ence of "porno shops" in Washington and the maintenance of American power in the Mediterranean. The confusion, though not identical, is similar to that which sees behind the multitude of disparate events which take place in the world a presumed "crisis of capitalism" by which wars, revolutions, and other distresses are ultimately explained. These judgments, one might say, are the product of a peculiarly bookish outlook on the world. They depend, for their power to convince, on the acceptance of a long chain of speculation about the character of an economy or a society: speculation which, necessary to the academic enterprise as it must be, is yet always precarious and doubtful, and unfit to serve as a guide for practical action and political decision. But the prestige of academics in the modern world, and particularly in America, is such that economic and sociological disquisitions have come to be looked on as the indispensable foundation on which all serious political debate must rest.

An example of this tendency is a volume entitled *The Crisis of Democracy: Report on the Governability of Democracies to the Trilateral Commission.** According to a statement on the title page, the Trilateral Commission was formed in 1973 by private citizens of Western Europe, Japan, and North America to study, and seek solutions to, problems common to these regions. The present report is the work of a Task Force on the Governability of Democracies which was set up in the spring of 1974, and which reported a year later. The members of the Task Force were Michel J. Crozier, director of the *Centre de Sociologie des Organisations*, Paris; Samuel P. Huntington, professor of government at Harvard; and Joji Watanuki, professor of sociology at Sophia University, Tokyo. They have each contributed a chapter, respectively, on Western Europe, the United States, and Japan; in writing their papers, the three authors enjoyed the benefit of consulting an eminent body of (mostly academic) experts.

THE considerations which prompted the Trilateral Commission to form the Task Force are set out by Zbigniew Brzezinski, former director of the commission, in an introductory note. Brzezinski begins by asking, "Is democracy in crisis?" and then goes on:

> This question is being posed with increasing urgency by some of the leading statesmen of the West, by columnists and scholars, and—if public opinion polls are to be trusted—even by the public. In some respects, the mood of today is reminiscent of that of the early 20's, when the views of Oswald Spengler regarding "The Decline of the West" were highly popular. This pessimism is echoed, with obvious *Schadenfreude*, by various Communist observers, who speak with growing confidence of the "general crisis of capitalism" and who see in it the confirmation of their own theories.

What, then, does the Task Force say: *is* democracy in crisis? We find that it does agree with the "Communist observers" that democracy is indeed in crisis, and also that this has to do with something very much like those observers' notion of the "general crisis of capitalism." At the very outset of their study, the members of the Task Force quote some "acute observers" in support of the view that the future for democracy is bleak. One of these is Willy Brandt; in his estimation, "Western Europe has only 20 or 30 more years of democracy left in it; after that it will slide, engineless and rudderless, under the surrounding sea of dictatorship, and whether the dictation comes from a politburo or a junta will not make that much difference." We do not know on what ground or evidence this expression of despair is based. The Task Force refers to the rediscovery of the fifty-year Kondratieff cycle. According to this theory 1971, like 1921, marks the beginning of a period of economic depression in the industrialized capitalist world which will not come to an end before the close of the century. The argument here is that the politics of the 70's and the 80's will therefore be as disastrous as the politics of the decades between the two world wars proved to be. Such a line of reasoning not only asserts a direct connection between economics and politics, but also clearly postulates that economics governs political developments.

The Task Force does not commit itself to these precise theories, but it does clearly take for granted the existence of such a connection. "The viability of democracy in a country," it emphasizes, "clearly is related to the *social structure and social trends* in that country"; or, more pointedly, "political democracy requires economic growth." The statement seems at first sight clear, indeed obvious; but it is really quite puzzling. Democracy, we take it, is a form of government in which authority to rule is deemed to be derived from the governed. As such, it is compatible with a multitude of social structures and social trends. But what the Task Force means by democracy—in a usage that is now quite prevalent—is more than a government deriving its title to rule from the governed. By democracy the authors of this book mean also "regular elections, party competition, freedom of speech and assembly." But if they mean all these things by democracy, our puzzlement is, if anything, increased, for why then do they also say that a "social structure in which wealth and learning were concentrated in the hands of a very few would not be conducive to democracy"? All the world knows that 18th- or 19th-century England, in which wealth and learning were concentrated in the hands of a few, had regular elections, party competition, and freedom of speech and assembly.

Our perplexity is not diminished as we get

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deeper into the report. We read in Michel J. Crozier's chapter that after World War I the need for order in Western Europe was met "by recourse to the Fascist and Nazi regressions," but that such a "setback" is not likely today; and this is because today there is "no strong will, no sense of mission, no real dedication to fight for the restoration of an earlier moral order," because "there is not so much will to fight for capitalism or even for free enterprise. No strong movement can be expected therefore," he declares by way of conclusion, "from a right-wing 'reactionary' background."

What seems to be put before us here is a simple and familiar Marxist schema, according to which "capitalism" and "free enterprise" belong to a bankrupt and moribund—a "reactionary"—epoch, which only "regressions" like Fascism and Nazism attempt, though foolishly and in vain, to revive. This may please the "Communist observers" of whom Brzezinski speaks, but it sheds no light on the "crisis of democracy." Mussolini and Hitler did not fight in the cause of "free enterprise," and their movements, far from being "regressions," were (like Bolshevism) something fairly novel in European history. Here again we see confusion promoted and clarity confounded by these grandiose *tableaux* in which society, economy, and politics are made to perform in unison before our dazzled eyes.

Consider again—to take another instance—Samuel P. Huntington's chapter on the United States. According to him the "basic" point in American politics today is this: "The vitality of democracy in the United States in the 1960's produced a substantial increase in government activity and a substantial decrease in governmental authority." What this statement seems to mean is that there was an increase in public expenditure on "welfare," and that certain policies and actions by the government (Vietnam, the draft) aroused vehement opposition. But in fact there is no visible connection between the increase in welfare expenditures and the decline in confidence which the government's conduct of foreign policy produced, nor is there any logical link to be discerned between these phenomena and "the vitality of democracy," since such vitality would have been equally compatible with a decrease in welfare expenditures and with support for a government's foreign policy. Huntington, moreover, speaks as if democracy, "participation," and egalitarianism necessarily go together. This of course is the cant of the age, and one might have hoped it would not have been accepted. For democracy—which concerns the source of government authority—entails nothing about participation, which relates to the way in which government is carried on; and it does not imply that the members of a democratic polity are, or ought to be, equal.

If *The Crisis of Democracy* cannot be said to enlarge, or to enhance the clarity of, political discourse—quite the contrary—does it at least have anything to report about current conditions in the regions with which it deals? Its main message seems to be that in the United States, Western Europe, and Japan, a quarter of a century's prosperity has brought its own discontents. "In all three Trilateral regions," the Task Force affirms in the introduction, "a shift of values is taking place away from the materialistic, work-oriented, public-spirited values toward those which stress private satisfaction, leisure, and the need for 'belonging and intellectual and aesthetic self-fulfillment.'" Expectations have escalated, and their possible—probable—disappointment will create problems, all the greater by reason of the encouragement which governments of all shades have given to the idea that they have it in their power to insure perpetual prosperity for everyone.

The crisis which is the subject of this book, then, is not so much a crisis of democracy as one of prosperity. Yet far from being a new academic discovery, the notion that prosperity spoils people and makes them difficult and flighty is a piece of immemorial wisdom: "Yeshurun waxed fat and kicked," as Deuteronomy puts it, and Dryden, centuries later, echoes the theme:

> God's pampered people, whom, debauched with ease,
> No king could govern nor no God could please.

For such murmurings and discontents there may in truth be no efficacious remedy, except, ultimately, the harsh, impersonal one of scarcity and privation. To put it in the language favored by the Task Force: "The new values may not survive recession and resource shortage." Political science does not seem to have a universal or general recipe to offer to rulers who are faced with such problems. It may tell them to learn, if they can, from their mistakes, and to try and play it by ear—an ability which may have atrophied from reading too many books, and deferring too much to academics.

IN WHAT the Task Force proposes, however, we catch a hint of something distinctly more ambitious, and in its ambitiousness distinctly *dirigiste*. The introduction declares that the new values—private satisfaction, leisure, etc.—"pose an additional problem for democratic government in terms of its ability to mobilize its citizens for the achievement of social and political goals and to impose discipline and sacrifice upon its citizens in order to achieve those goals." In the conclusion the Task Force similarly laments that a sense of purpose, hitherto supplied by religion, nationalism, and ideology, is now in short supply. Crozier much admires the strength of European Communist parties, and goes so far as to say that they are "the only institutions left in Western Europe where authority is not questioned," that "their machine has remained extraordinarily efficient," and that there is now "no other institu-

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tion in Europe, not even the state bureaucracies, that can match the Communist parties' capabilities in this domain."

Such remarks indicate clearly enough the drift of the book. The Task Force does not believe that the duty of government is to maintain the conditions in which citizens may pursue and realize their own various, spontaneous, self-chosen purposes. It seems, rather, to believe that survival requires governments to prescribe and direct the activities of their citizens. Crozier demands of West European governments nothing less than "a basic mutation in their model of government and their mode of social control." What precisely do these aspirations entail? The answer is not in doubt. The Task Force, for instance, believes in strong well-organized trade unions. The reason? Because otherwise "the formulation and implementation of a national wage policy become impossible," and the authority of the government is weakened. Again, the Task Force lays it down that the control of inflation and the promotion of economic growth *must* have top priority; governments *must* establish a minimum floor of guaranteed subsistence for all citizens; and specific measures toward these ends *must* be devised by "economists and planners." "Political democracy," the authors sagely conclude, "requires economic growth; economic growth without inflation depends upon effective democratic planning."

What, we may wonder, is the value of these unqualified, categorical assertions and prescriptions, and by what authority are they made? It is clear that such statements cannot have a basis in historical, or political, or economic science. For do we not know that a "national wage policy" devised and imposed by government, simply because it must sooner or later break down, must also bring the authority of government into disrepute? And as for planning, promoting economic growth, and controlling inflation, can all these imperatives be simultaneously obeyed? Will they not hamstring one another? Have we not seen how many governments have come a cropper on these alleged imperatives, and should we not have been invited to consider the thought that perhaps governments can do very little, that the very attempt by them to do so much may in fact make them fit to do even less?

Doubts of this kind, doubts which are not easily stilled, lead in their turn to other doubts. For we find ourselves asking whether there has not been altogether too much of this kind of exercise, and all to the detriment of the public weal? Whether academics have any special qualification to engage in them? Whether public men are wise to pay so much attention to these heavy disquisitions? And whether they should not allow themselves to entertain—if only for a minute—the thought that three workingmen discoursing of public affairs in a bar may perhaps display more clarity, shrewdness, and common sense?

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The Dilemma of Conservative Judaism

Lawrence J. Kaplan

One of the most striking and important developments on the American Jewish scene in the twenty years immediately following World War II was the emergence of Conservative Judaism as the most popular religious movement among American Jews. As a social movement, Conservative Judaism provided the framework in which large numbers of upwardly mobile Jews, primarily of Eastern European background and themselves immigrants or children of immigrants, integrated themselves into middle-class urban or suburban American culture while at the same time maintaining ties with their traditional roots. As an ideology, it provided these Jews a middle ground between Reform and Orthodoxy: whereas the former seemed to have all but abandoned the dictates and practices of Jewish religious law, and the latter seemed frozen into rigidity, Conservative Judaism appeared to offer a delicate but fruitful balance between tradition and change that spoke to the situation and needs of most American Jews.

Yet today, at the very height of Conservatism's phenomenal popular success, leading spokesmen of the movement appear to have become plagued by self-doubt, disquiet, and gloom. In fact, Conservative Judaism in recent years has been undergoing a crisis of confidence which is still far from being resolved. An examination of that crisis tells much about the current condition of belief among many American Jews.

In an essay a few years ago in *Midstream*, Marshall Sklare, the prominent sociologist of American Jewry and the author of a definitive study of the Conservative movement, isolated three contributing factors behind Conservatism's newly worried mood. First was the sudden and unexpected emergence of Orthodoxy as a vital, aggressive, and self-confident movement in American Jewish life. The development of an Orthodox middle class and intelligentsia, Sklare wrote, challenged Conservatism's faith in itself as the wave of the future, just as it gave the lie to the belief that Orthodoxy was a relic of the past. Second, the Conservative ideology of tradition-and-change seemed to be failing to achieve its announced goal, namely, greater observance of Jewish religious law. "There is not a single Conservative congregation," wrote Sklare, "where the overwhelming majority of congregants practice the commandments according to the Conservative regimen." Third, Sklare pointed out, despite the relative success of Conservative programs in training an elite corps of young Jews to become future rabbis and community leaders, many among the younger generation, no longer sustained by the memory of traditional Eastern European Jewish culture and often suspicious of the middle-class American culture into which Conservative Judaism has so well integrated itself, had become alienated from the Conservative movement, from Jewish religious practice, and from organized Judaism in general. Given all this, Sklare concluded, it was perhaps not so surprising that Conservative leaders should be beset by worries, even despite the fact that by objective criteria—numbers of adherents, size of congregations, and financial resources—Conservative Judaism continued to be more successful than either Reform or Orthodoxy.

There is yet another reason for the crisis of confidence in Conservative Judaism, one which Sklare in his *Midstream* article alluded to but did not discuss. This is that the particular Conservative ideology of tradition-and-change has not only proved a failure in winning over masses of Jews to religious observance, it has increasingly become a contested and divisive arena within the movement itself. Not only in practice but in theory too, Conservative Judaism had staked out for itself what it saw to be a middle ground, but this middle has come to seem fragile, ambiguous, and tenuous, and appears now to be in the process of dissolving. Conservative Judaism is splitting into two antagonistic ideological camps, one of which places ever greater emphasis on tradition and ever smaller emphasis on change, while the other does just the opposite.

According to classic Conservative doctrine, the very procedures by which Jewish religious law came to be formed, as exemplified in the Talmud and even more importantly in the post-talmudic medieval rabbinic literature, contain within themselves the necessary flexibility to function effectively in 20th-century America. The Conservative

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contention was that Orthodoxy had needlessly panicked in the face of modernity, with its twin threats of assimilation and secularization, and out of this sense of panic had turned the halakhah, Jewish religious law, into a rigid code of behavior and prescript. Conservative rabbis, on the other hand, saw themselves as the true successors of the old, pre-modern halakhic tradition, with its built-in flexibility and its ability to change with changing circumstances while still remaining within the bounds of its own norms.

What did Conservative rabbis mean when they spoke of change within the law? In large part, what they had in mind was liberalization. This seemed desirable for a number of reasons. New social and historical circumstances had made it difficult even for committed Jews to observe particular laws. In addition, many laws seemed unacceptable, objectionable, or offensive in the light of modern sentiments and values. There was also the strong conviction that liberalization would win over many uncommitted Jews to practice. And beyond this, when Conservative rabbis spoke of change they generally thought of it as a good *per se,* part of Judaism's character as a living religion.

The specific halakhic model which Conservative scholars adopted for the purpose of effecting change while staying within the bounds of halakhah was the responsum. The responsum is a judicial opinion which draws upon the rich body of talmudic and medieval Jewish law to resolve new legal problems posed by changing social, cultural, economic, and historical conditions. In its very form it embodies the confrontation between the timeless, fixed, normative world of sacred law and the fluid, ever-changing, concrete social situation. While relying heavily on precedent and tradition the responsum is alert to circumstances which may in turn require new and different applications of the law, and in applying the law in these new circumstances it takes full advantage of the maneuverability provided by the complex, confusing, and sometimes contradictory views in which the accumulated body of Jewish legal doctrine abounds.

Now, what has happened over the last decades is that the classic genre of the responsum has proved an insufficient instrument for enabling Conservative Judaism to make the changes in the law it has felt to be necessary. Many of the major changes that the movement has instituted, indeed, could not be justified in a traditional halakhic manner, and have therefore been made *de facto* rather than *de jure*. A striking example is the mixed seating of men and women in the synagogue, perhaps the major feature distinguishing Conservative synagogue practice from Orthodox. No official responsum has ever been issued to justify this move—undoubtedly because the clear and universal consensus of all talmudic and post-talmudic sources requires separate seating. The result is that a significant change has been instituted in Jewish religious life by a procedure that contravenes the very tenet to which Conservatism had pledged the highest allegiance.

Even in cases where responsa *have* been issued to justify desired changes, they have often stretched the halakhic process to its breaking point, or beyond. Many Conservative responsa, despite the resemblance they bear to classical models, are characterized by a certain looseness of thought, resulting from a willingness to ignore the limits of halakhic flexibility, which can be illustrated by the two most hotly debated responsa issued by the Committee on Law and Standards of the Rabbinical Assembly, the Conservative rabbinical body: the responsum permitting driving an automobile to the synagogue on the Sabbath, and the responsum justifying the inclusion of women in a *minyan* (prayer quorum).

The primary reason for the responsum on driving was sociological: modern synagogues in suburban areas are often beyond reasonable walking distance for many members. But in order to justify riding to the synagogue halakhically, the Rabbinical Assembly had to show that the combustion of energy involved in driving an automobile was not a form of work prohibited on the Sabbath, specifically that of kindling. (In classical halakhah, abstention from work on the Sabbath takes precedence over attendance in the synagogue.) To establish this point, the responsum propounded a unique interpretation of a certain talmudic rabbi's view concerning the nature of prohibited work on the Sabbath. Yet, as has been pointed out by the responsum's critics within the Rabbinical Assembly, in the view of many authorities the law is not decided in accordance with the opinion of that rabbi; moreover, the interpretation of his opinion offered by the Conservative responsum is dubious in the extreme, and even if one were to follow it, driving an automobile would still be prohibited on the Sabbath. There is, finally, a deep irony embedded in this responsum, for in order to justify the sort of change in the law they wished to bring about, the rabbis drafting it had to rule out one of the prime modes of argumentation—the use of the principle of analogy—by which halakhah adjusts to new conditions.

If new living patterns lay behind the responsum on driving an automobile to synagogue on the Sabbath, the spirit of feminism lay behind the responsum justifying the inclusion of women in the *minyan*. Here, again, halakhic grounds were sought and supposedly found—in this case, in the view of a 13th-century rabbi that if nine men are present at a *minyan,* a woman may be counted to make up a quorum of ten. But even if the fact is ignored that the view of this rabbi is disputed by all subsequent authorities, it would be difficult, as Rabbi David Feldman wrote in his dissenting opinion, to extend that view to allow women to count on the same level as men. Here, too, the halakhic process was stretched beyond recognition in order to provide the desired result.

The classical halakhic process of interpretation

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and development, then, as exemplified in the responsa literature, has come to seem inadequate to achieving the goals of Conservative Judaism. It is out of the painful awareness of this state of affairs that the entire ideological enterprise of Conservatism has increasingly come under attack from within the movement. This attack is coming from two directions at once, from the "Right" and from the "Left."

On the "Right," many young and articulate rabbis of a strong traditionalist bent have both criticized specific changes in the halakhah set forth by the Rabbinical Assembly and argued generally that there is a limit to the liberalization which halakhic Judaism can undergo in order to be brought into consonance with contemporary values and sentiments. Two such men are Rabbi David Feldman and Rabbi David Novak.

Feldman is the author of *Birth Control, Marital Relations, and Abortion in Jewish Law*, a highly acclaimed historical study of a basic area of Jewish law which at the same time exemplifies the classic halakhic process of analysis. Though Feldman does arrive at a "liberal" position on the question of abortion—leaning toward the view that it is permitted if the pregnancy causes "grave pain," physical or psychological, to the mother—he does so by way of a thorough study of all halakhic literature on this difficult and complex subject, and a careful use of liberal precedent. Moreover, Feldman makes his own point of view clear, which is that wherever there is a clash between halakhah and modern-day values, it is halakhah which must have the final say—as was mentioned above, it was he who wrote the minority opinion opposing the inclusion of women in the *minyan*.

David Novak's *Law and Theology in Judaism*, a collection of responsa on a variety of subjects, offers perhaps the most extensive critique so far of the Conservative drive toward liberalization. In the essay, "Riding on the Sabbath," for example, Novak not only objects on halakhic grounds to the Conservative decision in this matter, but goes beyond this to point out that the entire question only arose in the first place because people were not committed to the halakhah:

> One chooses where to live on the basis of his or her life priorities. If Sabbath-observance is high on the list of those priorities, one will make it his business to live in the neighborhood of the synagogue. If Sabbath-observance is not high on one's list of priorities, choice of a home will be determined by other considerations.

To Novak, the ideological error committed by the Conservative rabbinate is that instead of seeking to resolve hardships caused by people's adherence to the halakhah—the classical procedure—it has been seeking to resolve problems caused by people's *non*-adherence to the halakhah. By contrast, Novak, in essay after essay, stakes out what he regards as the proper halakhic ground. Toward abortion, he adopts a stance even more restrictive than that of many Orthodox rabbis; elsewhere, he objects to any ideological change in the text of the prayer book, stating that this is not a task for one rabbi or a group of rabbis to undertake. When Novak does allow for innovations, they are generally minor, limited, carefully argued, and always based on scrupulous documentation and precedent.

The general premise underlying Novak's work is worth citing at length, since it underlies as well the work of Feldman and of other rabbis in their camp:

> Although Jewish law is interpreted by humans for human situations, its sources are given by God. Many human abuses have crept into Jewish . . . law and we are morally obligated to correct them. Nevertheless, all our efforts must be directed toward correcting human deviations; before the law of God we can only be corrected. Therefore, before we correct human error we must accept the perfect authority of God. Laws of the Torah may be restricted by interpretation but they can never be permanently uprooted without our being false to the Torah system as a whole. Jewish moral zeal to right legal wrongs is self-defeating if it eclipses the transcendent authority of the law itself.

In the light of a statement such as this, it would seem that there is really nothing substantive dividing this wing of Conservatism from modern Orthodoxy. And indeed, any of Feldman's or Novak's essays, perhaps with slight stylistic revisions, would be perfectly in place in *Tradition*, the journal of modern Orthodox Jewish thought.

If the Conservative right wing has sought to put limits on the possibilities of change and liberalization, the Conservative left wing, which forms the majority of the movement, has to the contrary become disillusioned with the whole halakhic process of the responsum, feeling that it is not adequate to the changes they believe are required (and perhaps feeling too that the genre has been overly abused in the service of liberalization). For change through interpretation, this wing of Conservatism wishes to substitute change through legislation. Rather than trying to seek, find, interpret, and apply legal precedents to new situations in order to justify innovation, the rabbis in this camp want the Conservative rabbinate to assume for itself the power to revise, change, and abrogate existing halakhah as it sees fit. In the technical terminology of Jewish law, the *teshuvah*, or responsum, is to be replaced by the *takkanah*, the ordinance. The rabbi will no longer act as a judge, but as a legislator; he will no longer interpret but proclaim.

A striking illustration of the difference between the old and the new methods is the treatment of the issue of feminism. Rabbi Phillip Sigal, the author of the official responsum justifying the inclusion of women in the *minyan*—a responsum that proceeds in classical style, attempting to find a precedent to justify the desired move—is also the author, under his own name, of an article that bears the revealing title, "Elements of Male Chau-

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vinism in Classical Halakhah" (*Judaism*, Spring 1975). In that article Sigal asserts that the treatment of women in classical Jewish law was determined by the male chauvinism of the ancient rabbis. Since, however,

> we live in a new age [and] possess a whole new mind-set toward the [question of] the equality of the sexes, it behooves us immediately to remove all obstacles to the full participation of women, publicly and privately, in all the rituals of Judaism.

Here plainly the call is for total revision based on proclamation, legislation, and abrogation of existing law, not just some slight changes brought about through interpretation.

The philosophy underlying Sigal's approach and the approach of other Conservative rabbis who call for new legislation is spelled out in an article by a young Conservative scholar, Elliot Dorff, "Toward a Legal Theory of the Conservative Movement" (*Conservative Judaism*, Spring 1973). For Dorff, the move from interpretation to legislation represents an effort to recapture the pristine mode of rabbinic Judaism. Whereas the post-talmudic authorities of the Middle Ages developed the law primarily through interpretation of the Talmud, the talmudic masters themselves, writes Dorff, felt free to abrogate old law and create new law. This is the example Dorff urges on his fellow Conservative rabbis. Just as the talmudic masters did not consider themselves bound by past precedent, so we too, he argues, "should not feel ourselves bound by the specific decrees of the rabbis of any previous generation"; the past is to be accorded "a voice but not a veto."

In its professed desire to return to the methods, approaches, and positions of the distant past as it imagines it, this version of Conservatism has tacitly abandoned the claim to be the legitimate heir of pre-modern Judaism and is acting as a typical reforming movement. Indeed, just as the right wing of Conservatism seems to be approaching modern Orthodoxy, so the left wing of Conservatism seems to be approaching Reform, which in its early stages sought in a similar fashion to justify radical changes in the present by an appeal to the pristine past. The irony is greater, however, in the latter case than in the former. For Conservative Judaism when it was begun as a movement at the end of the 19th century defined itself explicitly over against Reform, and in particular over against Reform's disregard of halakhah—so much so that for a long time Conservatism was seen by many as an American variant of Orthodoxy. In fact, it has continually drifted away from Orthodoxy in the direction of Reform, and that drift has now begun to find ideological rationalization in the thought of spokesmen like Rabbis Sigal and Dorff.

Not that the reforming trend in Conservatism is without roots of other kinds. In part, it represents a reaction against the recent rise of Orthodox sectarianism, a phenomenon that is perceived as a threat by many Conservative leaders.* And in part too it reflects the desperate and rather naive belief that where partial liberalization of halakhah failed to win Jews over to observance, greater liberalization will succeed. In the greatest measure, however, the reforming tendency arises ineluctably out of the inner logic of the old Conservative theory of halakhah, which in its commitment to liberalization was bound, sooner or later, to move in the direction now being taken by a majority of its leading adherents.

THE dispute between the two emerging wings and philosophies of Conservative Judaism can perhaps most succinctly be stated as a series of questions. Can halakhic Judaism thrive in an open, liberal, modern society if it is in dissonance with the values of that society? How close must the "fit" be between halakhic values and modern ones? Shall we judge halakhah in the light of our values, or our values in the light of halakhah? The left wing argues that if the discipline of a religious law is to survive in meaningful fashion, its particular forms must be adjusted so as to fit into modern life and culture. The right wing argues that it is possible, and necessary, to live with the dissonance and tension between halakhic values and modern ones, for if modern sentiments and values are to be the ultimate arbiters, then we will end by doing away with halakhah altogether —after all, the very idea of a binding, limiting, religious law is unpalatable to the modern liberal mind.

The questions raised by this dispute push far beyond legal and historical arguments over the nature of the halakhic process to the basic issue that has faced the religious Jewish community since the beginning of the modern era. How is Judaism to exist as part of that world and yet maintain its distinct identity? Can it be open to all that modern culture and civilization have to offer and yet continue to adhere to its own, often conflicting, set of values? How it chooses to answer these fundamental questions will in large measure determine the future course of Conservative Judaism.

* In his July 1974 COMMENTARY article, "Voices of Orthodoxy," David Singer suggests that the "example of a vital Orthodox community" might "prod Conservative . . . Jews to a greater degree of traditionalism in their beliefs and practices." It is at least equally possible, though, that Orthodox sectarianism, accompanied as it is by growing antagonism toward Conservatism, will serve to bring about greater Conservative sectarianism.

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Italian Communism at Home and Abroad

Mauro Lucentini
Michael Ledeen

The New Class

Mauro Lucentini

ITALY, the poorest and the least productive of Western industrial nations, has a public payroll that is, in proportion to its population, ten times as large as that of the United States; parts of its bureaucracy are incredibly well paid, with secretaries in some branches of government getting salaries of $30,000. Italy's journalists, most of whom work for a government-subsidized press, are possibly the best paid in the world. More than half of the total Italian labor force has already retired on official pension plans. Some 25,000 state agencies exist solely for the purpose of supporting a government-produced clientele. Most Italian art, most Italian education, most of Italian culture is financed by the government and serviced by political protegés. Over the last fifteen years, in short, Italy has become the first major Western country to produce a New Class of the kind first described by the Yugoslav intellectual Milovan Djilas: a self-appointed, self-serving state elite.

All this has been brought about by the close cooperation of the Communists and the dominating left wings of the government parties. Both Communists and non-Communists have formed the New Class, even though the former have until now been underrepresented in it. At the moment, the entry of the Communists into the government at the national level (they already share in government at the local level and in parliament) is being resisted by an ever-weakening faction within the government parties, fighting an uphill battle. But Italy is already deeply "socialized"—most of its economy is already in government hands and the rest is subject to untold government controls and pressures; moreover, all forms of expression and of cultural life in Italy already march to the tune of left-wing values. A "shift" to Communism, then, would not introduce a radically new situation; it would lead to the further erosion and possible disappearance of freedoms that are already restricted. The access of the Communists to national government would constitute only the last phase of a process that has gone on for a long time: a phase wherein, the economy having collapsed, an authoritarian intervention would become necessary to save the privileges of the New Class. Only the Communist party has the political freshness, the cultural aura, and the international support necessary to perform this function.

The way in which two ostensible enemies, the government and the Communist party, have managed to cooperate in the last fifteen years in the interest of a common New Class is a miracle of political subtlety, even for Italian politics with its notorious arcana. Yet the objectives of cooperation have all along been straightforward and clear: first, to transfer assets from private hands to the "state," and second, to distribute these assets among the New Class.

AS DJILAS has shown, a New Class regime is a dynamic force, but there is a sharp difference in the way this dynamism has manifested itself in the countries of Eastern Europe and in Italy. In the former, the New Class was installed at the top by force and in a single

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stroke at the end of World War II; its further task has mainly been defensive, i.e., maintaining its privileged position. In Italy, the starting point at the end of the war was a clean slate: the New Class had to gain and then to maintain its power, a much more complicated process which required, in turn, a different strategy, based on a continuous play of alliances and co-optations.

The process has been going on since the end of the war, beginning slowly with the first timid attempts at postwar planning and "welfarization" and then accelerating dramatically with the opportunities offered in the late 50's by the Italian "economic miracle." But the real inauguration of the New Class occurred with the "opening to the Left" of 1961 (carried out with the blessing of the Kennedy administration), when the Socialist party was allowed into the government for the first time and a full-fledged client system was initiated, with all bureaucratic and para-governmental positions, down to the last errand boy, being shared among parties. This was followed by nationalizations and state acquisitions of private industry during the 60's, as well as by the government's absorption of the whole Italian financial and banking system. And in the meantime, of course, government itself was growing: in 1970 alone, the creation of twenty regional authorities, each with its own miniature parliament, caused an instantaneous doubling of the bureaucratic structure.

Throughout this entire course of development the numbers and the power of the New Class have increased apace. The years between 1966 and 1974 saw the takeover, both by Communists and by clients of the government parties, of positions in the nationalized industries, banking, the national executive structure, and the school system. The Communist assumption of power at the local level is as much a symptom as a cause of New Class influence in government, as are the increasing transference of sections of the press to Communist control and the allotment to the Communists of vital positions in parliament. Through its control of the unions and its ability to influence the enactment of laws favorable to its interests, the New Class has overseen the progressive regimentation of the Italian economy, a process which has driven private industry to the wall and brought about the ceding of its assets to the state. Italy is now a country where, by law, workers cannot be discharged, even if their employer is going bankrupt; where, also by law, workers are entitled not to work, that is, are entitled to abstain from work for "health reasons" which legally cannot be verified; and where, through the deliberate absence of a law regulating strikes, a firm can be ruined or blackmailed at any time by wildcat strikes.

HAND in hand with regimentation of the economy has gone New Class dominance of the culture, in particular of the communications media. Here a central role has been played by RAI-TV, a mammoth state monopoly that employs more people and spends more money, in proportion to its output, than any of the American networks, yet keeps the Italian public on a diet of programs as poor and uninformative as they are pretentious. RAI-TV has provided the New Class with its most powerful weapon —the tremendous impact of television propaganda in a not overly literate country—and with its most splendid set of material rewards. Officially, openly, without any pretense of managerial efficiency, RAI-TV distributes millions of dollars' worth of jobs and salaries through a laborious alchemy meant to reflect the vicissitudes of political life. No reference is made to professional competence in the selection process, and every so often a "crisis" of reorganization and expansion is brought about in order to accommodate the perpetually growing ranks of the New Class; one such crisis is happening now, designed to take on the new cohorts of Communists.

Through RAI-TV, a large portion of the Italian "intellectual" class—above all journalists, but also writers and artists—has been bought out. And thanks to RAI-TV's monopoly over video information, the Italian public has been given a distorted and sometimes brutally falsified picture of the outside world, tailored to the interests and preferences of the New Class. A consistent anti-American slant is only one of the effects; for years the "cultural" programs of RAI-TV have been used to create and reinforce a left-wing image of culture, until today the terms "Left" and "culture" in Italy have become almost synonymous.

Even outside the realm of radio and TV, cultural conformism is the order of the day. New Class dominance of the culture means that only slight and highly circumscribed forms of dissent are tolerated: otherwise one risks ostracism in all cultural fields and complete exclusion from some, like the movies and theater, where the Communists dominate. This development has been facilitated by the hegemony granted by the government to the Communists in the universities and in the school system—Communist activists have been installed as teachers at all levels, and many textbooks even in the elementary grades read like Marxist treatises. Cultural conformism is further facilitated—not just in education but in the whole field of art and culture—by the control over financing exercised by the Communists at the local level. Grade schools are largely financed by local money, and it is also local money that provides most of the funding for the innumerable prizes, art commissions, and scholarships that the New Class distributes among its own. Literary prizes carrying substantial awards number in the hundreds, and ancient Italian piazzas bristle with the officially-commissioned artistic creations of the Italian avant-garde; meanwhile, the Italian government hasn't enough money to keep the mu-

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seums open even during the tourist season or to protect classic Italian works of art from theft and disfigurement.

In addition to radio and television, the printed press too serves the interests of the New Class. All newspapers have been made completely dependent on the government, which has gradually placed under control every major element in the life of a newspaper: the newsstand price, the supply of printing paper, the allotment of advertising. Newspaper after newspaper has been driven to accumulate enormous deficits, and at the same time has been prevented by the unions from closing; control of the paper then passes directly to the New Class through the various government agencies or through government stand-ins. One such stand-in has been the publisher and industrialist Rizzoli, himself on the verge of bankruptcy, whose firm was summoned to buy out some of the major dailies and transform them into a *presse de régime*. The deal was closed thanks to an unprecedented loan of $250 million granted to Rizzoli by the state financial agency, IMI, without any visible collateral. Among Rizzoli's ventures has been the purchase of the largest and most influential Italian newspaper, Milan's *Il Corriere della Sera*, previously a conservative bulwark of the Italian bourgeoisie, now a covert supporter of Communist entry into the government and, after RAI-TV, the most important vehicle of New Class propaganda in Italy.

The example of Rizzoli illustrates one interesting feature of the progress of Communism in Italy and of the formation of the New Class: the voluntary help given by business, in a way exactly parallel to the course followed during the rise of Fascism. Business has found that there are rewards to be had in growing government intervention, and while sometimes it has resisted, at other times it has promptly accepted the system of subsidies and corruption enacted by the New Class.

But whatever the role played by the private business community in bringing about the current state of affairs, in the end none of it would have been possible without the Communist party. A large majority of all laws approved by parliament in the last ten years came about as a result of negotiation with the Communist party. The Communists, furthermore have systematically used the unions to destabilize the economy. Unceasing pressure by the Communist-controlled unions (usually helped by the smaller but even more aggressive and disruptive unions originally set up by the government parties) has been fundamental in wearing down the private sector. Thus, contrary to the conventional analysis, it is not the dislocation of the Italian economy which has produced the need to give the Communists a new role in government; it is, rather, the role already granted the Communists by the Italian Left which caused the dislocation of the economy.

It is also true that the economic situation has now reached a breaking point that threatens both the Communists and the government, and the New Class that they have created. The "working class" has become restless and unpredictable: the portion that has not joined the New Class in the growing structures of the corporate state has been left out in the cold, and its demands, after having been wildly encouraged, have now become unsatisfiable, except through the short-term and self-defeating remedy of inflationary money printing. Another cause of worry is the "non-working" class, i.e., the vast army of unemployed that has always been a feature of the Italian south. No reliable statistics exist, but in certain areas, like the city of Naples, most of the adult population is perennially unemployed. Until now, all these people have formed the electoral strength of the Communists, but this could change. Both the Communists and their allies in the government run the risk of losing their backing: with the economy at a standstill, something has to give, and the real issue is whether it is to be the parasitic superstructure represented by the New Class, or the standard of life of the rest of the population.

The surfacing of the Communist party at the government level is meant to provide a solution. The Communists have already promised to rein in, through the unions, the very same social class that they themselves, through the same unions, unleashed against the economy. Should that reining-in prove to be unachievable through persuasion, the party could—once it was in power—undoubtedly find other means to force upon the workers the sort of discipline workers already enjoy in Poland and Rumania.

FACED with the prospect of the formal entry of the Communists into the national government, some observers have spoken hopefully of a "Communism Italian-style," meaning a regime that would be blander and enjoy a larger consensus than any of those ruling Eastern Europe. It is true that Italians remain Italians, and that the Marxist-Leninist faith of Communist Italians is hardly of the Stalinist or iron type, just as their nationalist-imperialist faith was not of the iron type under Fascism. One cannot believe, for example, that in a Communist Italy great masses of political opponents would be exterminated or sent to concentration camps: it is not the Italian style. In fact, this ideological blandness or genial sloppiness is a point Italian Communists proudly make about themselves, and use to political advantage. Nevertheless, it is certain that, once in power, the Communists would retain enough orthodoxy to insure the safety and security of their own power and that of the New Class, of which they would become the guarantors; and it is also certain that under their tutelage the corrupt, nepotistic aristocracy that has been formed in Italy would settle down to its final and undisturbed reward.

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The Soviet Connection

Michael Ledeen

IT IS becoming fashionable to speak of European Communism, particularly the Italian party (PCI), as if it were a major schism in the world Communist movement, and consequently a threat to the hegemony of the Soviet Union—the same kind of threat that Martin Luther was to the Church of Rome. Yet, while no one would deny that there are areas of dispute between PCI Secretary Enrico Berlinguer and Leonid Brezhnev, far too much has been made of these disagreements. Furthermore, and most importantly for those who are trying to influence American foreign-policy makers to take a more tolerant (or even positive) attitude toward European Communism, the conflicts between the PCI and the Soviet Union have virtually nothing to do with foreign policy. The fact is that if Italy were governed by the PCI, it would represent a major threat to the security of Western Europe.

In a series of conversations with half-a-dozen leading PCI policy makers early this past summer, I asked them to describe the conflicts, if any, between their party and the Soviet Union in the area of foreign policy. They answered with a single voice: no such conflicts exist. The party's line remains unchanged from Berlinguer's famous statement to the London *Times* last February:

> We support the fundamental philosophy behind the policy of peaceful coexistence and détente that is being practiced by the Soviet Union. But we do not see why this should occasion surprise. It would be irresponsible for us not to recognize what is widely recognized elsewhere, that the Soviet Union's peace policy is in the general interest of mankind.

It may seem peculiar to hear such words from a man who has been widely described as a heretic of the international Communist church, but the nature of the Italian Communist heresy has been generally misunderstood. In many ways it is similar to Dubcek's, and the Czech question is very important for understanding the PCI's approach to foreign policy. In February 1969 the PCI officially denounced the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia on the ground that the Czechs had not threatened either the unity of the socialist camp or the international balance of power. Dubcek would have remained within the Warsaw Pact. He was not challenging the validity of the Soviet Union's foreign policy. He simply wished to follow an independent road to socialism, based on a popular consensus within his own country.

The leaders of the PCI are currently pushing the same themes with regard to their own participation in NATO and the overall policy of détente. They are saying to both the Russians and the Americans that the PCI should not be considered a threat to the current balance of power. The Italian Communists want their country to remain in NATO and the Common Market. Like Dubcek, they say, they are not interested in disrupting the Atlantic alliance or the Warsaw Pact. They simply want the chance to pursue their own path toward socialism, based on a popular consensus.

There is no reason to suspect that these statements reflect any diabolical strategy, for the PCI is not interested in becoming another satellite of the Soviet Union any more than it wishes to be under the thumb of the United States. As one high party official put it to me, it would not matter greatly to the PCI if it were eaten by the Russians rather than the Americans, since "we would be thoroughly digested in either case."

What is of great importance, however, is the Italian Communists' notion of what they would do within the NATO alliance. In a front-page editorial on March 1, the official party newspaper *l'Unità* proclaimed that it was "unthinkable" that the PCI could "accept the Atlantic Pact as it actually is." The PCI proposes to make fundamental changes in the policies of NATO, all directed toward weakening American and German influence and strengthening the "new European forces" (read "Eurocommunism"). In fact, the image of NATO which one finds in PCI rhetoric these days is fundamentally the same that was heard prior to the shift in Communist strategy on this question. Back in 1969, for example (when the PCI was still calling for Italian withdrawal from NATO), the Atlantic alliance was described as "the principal support for capitalism in Western Europe," and "a democratic transformation of Italian society" was deemed possible "only by breaking the conditioning influence of [NATO]." Last March, *l'Unità* put it in much the same way: "[NATO] is one of the fundamental instruments for American manipulation of the politics and economy of our country and of Western Eruope . . . the relations between the countries of Western Europe and the two superpowers must be rediscussed."

This rediscussion would aim toward what the Italian Communists term a "transcendence of the bipolarization" of Europe. They are determined that Europe achieve a more thorough independence of the superpowers, and develop a foreign policy of its own. Such sentiments are undoubtedly admirable in many ways, but in practice they involve criticisms of American, not Russian, foreign policy. In fact, not a single one of the PCI leaders I spoke to believed that there was any menace to Europe from the Soviet Union. Giorgio Amendola was quite explicit: "Nobody really believes any longer that Russia is a threat to Western Europe," he said, and cited the Helsinki Pact and the development of Germany's *Ostpolitik* as evidence of the lack of any concern in the old continent about Russian territorial objectives. The PCI views America, not Russia, with grave misgiv-

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ings. Alberto Reichlin, editor of the party's theoretical weekly *Rinascita*, told me that the PCI was deeply concerned about the role of American multinational corporations in Italy, viewing it as a far more serious limitation of Italian sovereignty and freedom than any possible action from the other side of the Urals.

PCI opposition to American interests and support for Soviet ones often carry over into areas where one would expect a socialist party "with a human face" to be explicitly anti-Soviet. This was dramatically demonstrated during the negotiations for the Helsinki Pact, when the Italian Communists endorsed the Russian positions and opposed the Italian government's support for the European view. The Soviet Union tried very hard to get Premier Aldo Moro and Foreign Minister Mariano Rumor to endorse "Basket One" issues (irrevocability of boundaries, generally construed as accepting Russian control over the satellites) and to mute the "Basket Three" themes (multiple-entry visas for journalists, greater cultural exchange and civil liberties). The Italian government refused to shift its position, but the Russians demonstrated their appreciation for PCI efforts on their behalf at a party at the Soviet embassy in Rome at the end of June 1975. There were two Italian groups at the *festa*. The first was composed of the Premier, the Foreign Minister, and their advisers, while the second included Berlinguer and PCI foreign-policy officials, Sergio Segre and Gian Carlo Pajetta. While the governmental delegation dined with the other guests, the PCI leaders were entertained in a separate room by the Soviet ambassador's wife, and were treated to the finest caviar and champagne the embassy could offer.

The PCI, to be sure, has occasional conflicts with the USSR, but they are confined to discussions of the Russian attitude toward other socialist parties and countries. The Italians have long deplored the Sino-Soviet conflict, for example, and the death of Mao in September gave some PCI functionaries the opportunity to pose as great reconcilers between the Russians and the Chinese. But the Chinese were unwilling to be used as pawns in the Italians' propaganda game, and they coldly rejected the PCI's letter of condolence. Some disgruntled PCI members took the opportunity of Mao's death to complain about the strict alignment of Italian Communist policies with those of the Soviet Union, yet significantly, it was impossible for this complaint to be aired in the pages of the Italian Communist press; even one of the editors of *l'Unità*, Alberto Jacoviello, had to go to *Le Monde* in order to publish his claim that Mao's death had produced "a new fissure between the Soviet Communist party and the great Communist parties of Western Europe." *L'Unità* immediately announced that Jacoviello's ideas were his own private ones, and had nothing to do with the "line" of the PCI (in a subsequent interview with *Le Monde*'s Rome correspondent, Jacoviello noted that many party leaders had stopped talking to him).

The Sino-Soviet story is a particularly important one, for it shows how diligent the PCI has been in cultivating an image which is far removed from the truth. For years party leaders have been claiming that the PCI had—on its own initiative—tried to bring the Russians and Chinese together. But it now turns out that this "initiative" took place (in 1965) following specific instructions from Suslov. In short, even when the PCI disagrees with some Soviet views, it does not criticize the Russians from a position of independence. The PCI's criticisms are those of a "loyal opposition" which has no apparent intention of breaking with the Russian world view.

For the PCI simply does not see anything wrong with Soviet imperialism. Any Western actions to counter Soviet initiatives (or those of countries sympathetic to the USSR), on the other hand, are met with righteous indignation. Thus, American support for Holden Roberto in Angola was "imperialism," while the Cuban troops there at the Russians' behest were "freedom fighters." Thus, the Israeli liberation of the hostages hijacked to Entebbe by Arab-financed terrorists was termed an "intolerable violation of Uganda's national sovereignty" and the PCI called upon the Italian government to denounce Israel at the UN (the Italians, happily, supported the Western position in the debate). And thus too, when Henry Kissinger proposed a transition to black rule in Rhodesia, *l'Unità*, using the same expressions that had been appearing in *Tass* and *Pravda* for days, condemned this as an attempt to "save the neocolonial and military-strategic interests of imperialism."

The PCI attitude toward the Soviet Union and the United States was well summarized by Professor Giuseppe Are of the University of Pisa at a recent conference in Rome on Italy's role in international affairs. "In the Communist press," he observed, "one cannot find even one case in which an initiative, move, or design of Soviet foreign policy (or, to be more specific, its policy toward countries outside its bloc) has been considered to be in conflict with détente, or dangerous, threatening, aggressive, or censurable in any aspect."

At the same Rome conference, Professor Karl Kaiser of the Bonn Institute of International Affairs asked PCI foreign-policy spokesman Sergio Segre what the Italian Communists would do in the event of a conflict between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. "I shall ask you some questions of my own," Segre said. "What conflict? Under what circumstances?" As Furio Colombo, one of Italy's most astute journalists, wrote the next day in *La Stampa*, Kaiser's unanswered question hung over the conference room, as it did over the country.

The PCI realizes that it can come to power and stay there only if there is no strong opposition

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either within Italy or the Western community. They do not wish to follow the path of either Allende or Cunhal, and consequently Berlinguer has advocated a *compromesso storico*—alliance with the Christian Democrats—which would give him international protection at the same time that it guaranteed the absence of a strong domestic opposition party. The need to come to power in a context of consensus and stability explains the change in PCI tactics regarding NATO, just as it also explains in part the PCI's strong advocacy of an integrated Europe and an effective Common Market. Since Italian departure from NATO would seriously disrupt the balance of power and threaten détente, the Communists will not demand that their country withdraw; and since it would be far more difficult to isolate a Communist Italy if it were thoroughly integrated in the European polity and economy than if it stood alone, the Communists support an integrated Europe.

Yet in both cases the PCI speaks in different tongues to different audiences. On the issue of NATO, the PCI tells its own members that NATO must be radically transformed, and that it is "unthinkable" to support it in its present form. Similarly, readers of the party press are frequently treated to long diatribes against the Common Market, and to pleas that "the imports of foodstuffs and raw materials be strictly controlled." During the Arab oil boycott the PCI called for increased European independence of the United States as a means of avoiding conflicts with the Third World, and Berlinguer often sounds like a traveling ambassador-without-portfolio when he issues joint proclamations with radical Third World leaders which are hardly calculated to win him favor among other European "partners." Last winter, for example, following a tour by the Secretary to North Africa, *l'Unità* noted that the emerging countries were looking for a more harmonious relationship with Europe in the future, and went on to ask a rhetorical question for its readers:

> Which Europe? That of Giscard or Bonn, which is trying to fill the void left by other European countries, re-proposing an exquisitely neocolonialist program? Or that which left Kissinger an open field at a recent special session of the UN on primary materials?
>
> There is renewed interest in the initiatives of the European democratic workers' movement, and, what concerns us more directly, the Italian one. . . .

The point here is not the rather surprising claim that emerging nations are interested in a workers' movement which leads the world in loss of productivity due to strikes, but rather that the PCI's concept of the Europe of the future is strikingly closer to Brezhnev's dreams than to those of Schmidt or Giscard. It is noteworthy that the leaders of European social democracy have by and large not waxed enthusiastic about the prospect of PCI participation in the Italian government. Mario Soares is perhaps the most categorical (he called PCI leaders "archeological examples of a tactical approach which the history of Eastern European countries has condemned for several decades"), but in recent months Harold Wilson and Helmut Schmidt have both warned about the consequences of an Italian "historic compromise." Schmidt's statements, and the Italian reaction, are particularly illuminating, since they show that the PCI is prepared to sing in the European chorus only so long as it selects the aria. But when the Western powers decide that it would be too risky to invest in an Italian government which had granted cabinet posts to the Communists, the PCI replays the old tune of foreign interference in Italian internal affairs.

ANOTHER significant measure of the PCI's continuing dependence on the Soviet Union is the degree to which its income is still involved in the Soviet connection. Like all members of the Comintern, the PCI was almost totally dependent upon Soviet aid for its income at the end of World War II. Party leader Palmiro Togliatti, who had seen Stalin's methods at first hand (and had himself applied them with exemplary efficiency against Polish and German Communists and Spanish anarchists during the 30's, when he held a high post in the Comintern), was determined that his party find ways to lessen its dependence upon Russian largesse. To this end the Italians developed an impressive network of import-export operations, some of which operated directly under party auspices, while others worked through either legitimate capitalist companies or the Communist-dominated Cooperative League. Togliatti and company took double commissions on Polish coal, Hungarian meat, and Soviet products coming into Italy, and on Italian fruit, vegetables, and automobiles headed eastward. With its excellent contacts in the Soviet bloc, the PCI became a logical middleman for Italian businesses which wanted to trade beyond the Iron Curtain, and the party collected (as it still collects) substantial agents' fees for its assistance.

While this system has lessened PCI dependence on *direct* Soviet aid, it does not seem to have contributed greatly to greater independence for the Italian Communists. The Soviet-related transactions are still the basis for PCI income. For example, one of the central figures in the Lockheed scandals uncovered by Senator Frank Church's Senate Subcommittee on Multinational Corporations turns out to have been a major contributor to PCI coffers precisely because of the help the Communists could give him in expanding his business activities in the Soviet Union. His name is Camillo Crociani, and before the news from Washington forced him to flee the country, he was president of Finmeccanica, one of the largest companies which form the giant state-owned holding

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trust, IRI. Finmeccanica owns the Alfa Romeo operation and is active in areas ranging from the Italian merchant marine to nuclear power plants. Crociani had been trying to do business in Russia for several years, and just prior to the discovery of the Lockheed payoffs (in which he was evidently deeply involved), he had been told by the Soviet ambassador to Italy to make a large payment to Restital of Milan, at that time the biggest and most profitable PCI company doing business in the Soviet Union.

In recent years the PCI has tried to make the ties that bind it to the Russians less obvious, and in the past several months has transferred several of its import-export firms from direct party control to the Cooperative League. The party has also been able to transfer some of its business activities to the domestic field, where its strength in local and regional governments makes it possible to capitalize on more traditional forms of money-making. Recent scandals have indicated that the PCI, like virtually all other parties in Italy, has been selling building permits under the table, manipulating zoning regulations, and forcing payoffs in areas under its control. But the bulk of its business continues to be international, as befits a party which has been aptly termed "the world's biggest multinational corporation" (and which is far and away the wealthiest party in the country).*

THOSE who are deeply concerned with the future of Italy and with the rationality of American foreign policy have an obligation to call the PCI to task, and to continue to challenge it. There has been a great deal of confusion over this issue. The New York *Times*, for example, recently suggested that the Italians should be left alone to settle their own affairs, without the warnings of foreign leaders. This is a singular argument from a newspaper which has generally advanced the cause of European unity, and evidently means that European goals should be encouraged silently. Are the Europeans (and the Americans) whose interests would in fact be threatened by PCI entry into the Italian government not permitted to voice their concern? And if they have decided not to send aid to such a government, should the Italians not be so informed, so that their electoral decision will be based on a thorough understanding of the consequences?

In short, it will not do for the Western democracies to maintain that the PCI is "destined" one day to enter the Italian government, and attempt to make their peace with the Communists on "pragmatic" or "Machiavellian" grounds. This serves neither Western interests in general nor those of the Italians in particular. If the PCI is indeed on the road to power, everything possible must be done to insure that a Communist government in Italy would not automatically signify—as it surely does today—a major security problem for NATO. If the PCI wishes to function within the context of the Atlantic alliance and a more united Europe, let it spell out for itself and its supporters the reasons for its allegiance. It is simply incoherent to maintain, as Berlinguer does, that the PCI wishes to be part of NATO but that the Soviet Union represents no threat to the West, just as it is incoherent for the PCI to proclaim its independence of Moscow while it continues to parrot the Soviet line on all foreign-policy questions which involve the West. And let the PCI make clear whether it is prepared to pay the price of losing its greatest contributor—the Soviet Union—in order to guarantee that no conflict of interest exists between its proclaimed Western allegiances and its Eastern European paymasters. Unless and until it does these things, all talk of a new "schism" within the Communist world must be considered nothing more than delusive propaganda.

* For a more complete analysis of PCI finance, see "Italy's Russian Sugar Daddies," by Michael Ledeen and Claire Sterling, the *New Republic*, March 12, 1976.

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Who Is in Prison?

James Q. Wilson

PRISONS are usually newsworthy only when their inmates riot, but of late they have become the focus of more general, and on the whole more constructive, attention. The revival of interest in the deterrent effects of the criminal-justice system, the spreading "prisoner-rights" movement, the decisions of various federal judges to close (or to threaten to close) various overcrowded or indecent jails and prisons, the sudden increase in the size of the prison population, and the emerging debate over whether new prison construction is desirable have all combined to thrust a venerable and unpleasant institution onto center stage.

The debate over prisons raises many issues—the length of sentences, the function of parole, the level of amenity, the feasibility of rehabilitation, the rights of inmates—but central to most of these issues are some mundane but rarely examined constraints. If one wishes to award longer sentences to those who now go to prison, or short sentences to a larger fraction of those convicted of a crime, one must find a place to put them. If one wishes to increase the level of amenity, it presumably requires lowering the density of prison populations: it is hard to imagine how to make any institution less brutal if three or four persons are assigned to a cell designed for one, or if persons must sleep in the corridor or on the floor. Among the rights that most inmates certainly cherish is the right not to be abused by fellow prisoners, yet that can scarcely be insured without producing a greater degree of privacy, and accordingly supplying more square feet, for each inmate. In short, the sheer capacity of the prison system will importantly influence what, if anything, can be done toward achieving various objectives.

In general, we do not know what the "capacity" of our prison system is. There are about 400 prisons, 158 community centers and work farms, and 33 other (reception, diagnostic, medical, or classification) facilities operated by the states. Half of all of these are located in the South. These figures, the best available, were compiled by the Census Bureau in January 1974, but that agency admits that there may be more or different institutions—it is hard to be certain what is a distinct facility, some facilities have more than one function, and half of the institutions in one state (Massachusetts) did not even bother to reply to the questionnaire. The survey did not indicate what the "capacity" of each facility was and no survey probably could, inasmuch as many correctional administrators have long since had to put more inmates into a prison than it was designed to receive and in consequence have administratively redefined what constitutes its capacity.

We do know that the great majority of prisoners are in conventional closed prisons, not in work farms or community centers. Though the movement to place more convicted offenders in these "open" facilities has grown of late, less than a tenth of the correctional population is in community centers and less than a seventh on prison farms. Though most inmates are in real prisons, the popular image of these facilities as uniformly ancient and decrepit is not necessarily true. Nearly half of all prisons were built since 1949 and three-fourths were constructed since 1924. There are at least 50 prisons, however, that were built in the 19th century, several around the time of the Civil War.

If we cannot measure the capacity of prisons, we can at least count their populations. Except for the period during and just after World War II, that population has been remarkably stable. There were 180,000 persons in state and federal prisons in 1939, and there were still about that many in prison fifteen years later, in 1954. During the 1950's, a period of relatively stable or only moderately rising crime rates, the prison population went up sharply—from 166,000 in 1950 to 213,000 in 1960. Then, during the 1960's, a period of rapidly increasing crime rates, the prison population actually declined from 213,000 in 1960 to 196,000 in 1970.

Why the prison population should go up when crime is not serious and go down when it has become a national crisis still defies explanation. One possibility is that certain judges came to believe that prison was an inappropriate way to treat criminals—because these facilities did not rehabil-

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itate, or because they were unpleasant places to live, or because prison was generally "illiberal." This explanation is lent plausibility by the fact that many of the largest reductions in state-prison populations during this decade occurred in states, such as New York, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, and Hawaii, with a strong tradition of liberal politics and presumably a liberal judiciary. Yet declines also occurred in Mississippi, West Virginia, Georgia, Alabama, Kansas, and Kentucky, hardly hotbeds of leftists.

One of the most intriguing theories devised to explain the relative stability over long periods of time in imprisonment rates is that advanced by Alfred Blumstein, Jacqueline Cohen, and Daniel Nagin of Carnegie-Mellon University. They show that, not only in the United States but in Norway and Canada as well, the imprisonment rate—the number of persons in prison per 100,000 population—is remarkably stable. Between 1930 and 1970 in this country it averaged around 110 with only small variations around this mean (the standard deviation was less than 9). In the late 1930's, the rate went up to abnormally high levels, in the 1940's down to abnormally low ones, in the 1950's it increased, and in the 1960's it decreased. Their theory is that society penalizes less serious offenses at times when serious crime is not a problem and lets off minor offenders when serious crime has become endemic. If murder is relatively uncommon or at least declining in rate (as it was during the 1950's), society will worry more about shoplifting, prostitution, and auto theft. When murder, assault, and robbery are increasing rapidly (as they did in the 1960's), society will ignore the shoplifter and seek—*de facto* if not *de jure*—to decriminalize prostitution.

The theory is quite suggestive, but thus far unproved. Among other difficulties, it does not account for the substantial variation among states in the use of prison. Crime rates during the 1960's were soaring in both Michigan and New Jersey, but whereas the former state reduced its prison population, the latter increased it despite similar rates of population change. Massachusetts officials have long been preoccupied with the dangers of overcrowded prisons and perhaps in consequence of this kept their prison population constant during the 1960's despite a tripling of the serious crime rate. South Carolina, on the other hand, allowed its prison population to rise by more than 30 per cent even though it meant increased overcrowding. For some states, the capacity of the prison system is apparently an important constraint on the sentencing practices of judges, but in other states it is not.

IN RECENT years, the prison population has started to rise again. In early 1976, according to *Corrections* magazine, there were nearly 250,000 persons in prison, the largest number since figures began to be kept. In the Blumstein, *et al.*, theory, this was to be expected—after allowing the imprisonment rate to fall during the 1960's (from 119 per 100,000 in 1960 to 97 per 100,000 in 1970), it was inevitable that pressure to respond to the crime wave would drive it back up to its traditional average of around 110. If that rate is applied to the estimated 1975 total population, it would produce a prison population of 234,000, significantly below the actual figure.

The reasons for the increase above expected levels are not hard to find. The population today is more youthful than at any other time in this century, and since young people are disproportionately criminals, it is not surprising that prisoners are growing in numbers faster than society generally. Furthermore, many of the young offenders who were first convicted in the 1960's are now being convicted for the third or fourth time and as a result can no longer expect to avoid prison through probation or suspended sentences. In addition it is *possible* that judges are becoming more severe, but since we have no national statistics on sentencing that can only be a conjecture.

There is nothing magical about the long-term stability of the imprisonment rate. Society can choose a higher or a lower rate, in part by altering its prison capacity. That can be accomplished by either building more facilities, reducing the sentences of those going to prison, or changing the mix of persons in prison. The first policy results in an absolute increase in prison size, the second permits more persons to be sentenced to prisons despite a constant capacity, and the third permits one to find prison space for increased numbers of more serious offenders.

No accurate national figures exist on changes in total prison capacity. The Federal Bureau of Prisons, which has in confinement about 10 per cent of all prisoners, has, in the last five years, opened thirteen new facilities with a total capacity of over 4,000 inmates but still feels that its system is overcrowded by about 5,000 inmates. Among the states, major new building programs are under way or proposed in Florida, Alabama, North Carolina, Ohio, and elsewhere. The National Moratorium on Prison Construction, a lobbying group sponsored by the Unitarian-Universalist Service Association and the National Council on Crime and Delinquency, which opposes prison construction, reports that it has heard of over 500 planned institutions. Whatever the actual figure, it has so far been inadequate to alleviate the severe overcrowding that now exists and that will, almost certainly, become worse.

Because capacity has not kept up with inmates, there has occurred a dramatic shift in the kinds of crimes for which persons go to prison. In 1960, the federal Bureau of Prisons counted about 151,000 persons in state prisons. In 1974, the Census Bureau (which has taken over the job of keeping

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track of prison populations) estimated, on the basis of a survey of about 10,000 inmates, that there were 188,000 persons in state prisons. The increase in size is partly an artifact of who was counted; in 1960, some states gave incomplete or inaccurate figures and persons not in closed prisons were often omitted. In 1974, the coverage was broader and included persons in certain state mental hospitals as well as those on work-release programs and in community centers. Because the figures are not entirely reliable, only gross differences should be noted. The striking finding is that prison is increasingly reserved for only the most serious offenders. Persons convicted of homicide, robbery, and assault made up one-third of the state-prison population in 1960 but nearly half in 1974. There are nearly twice as many murderers in prison today as in 1960 and 70 per cent more robbers. By contrast, the number of burglars, thieves, and auto thieves in prison has actually declined—from about 55,300 in 1960 to about 49,200 in 1974. (During this period, the reported rate of these crimes increased more than fourfold.)

OFFENSES FOR WHICH ADULT INMATES WERE SENTENCED TO STATE PRISONS*

Offense	*1960*	*1974*
Homicide	18,538	34,000
Robbery	24,627	42,400
Assault	7,739	9,000
Burglary	35,418	33,800
Larceny	14,284	12,200
Auto theft	5,633	3,200
Embezzlement, fraud, forgery	15,633	8,100
Sex (including rape)	12,656	11,700
Drugs	8,030	18,700
Other	8,144	14,400
TOTAL	150,702	187,500

Some have argued that we do not need more prisons because the ones we have are crowded with persons serving sentences for various "victimless" crimes. This was not true in 1960 and it is not true today. Only 10 per cent of the 1974 inmates were serving sentences for drug offenses and only one per cent for sex offenses other than forcible rape. Of the drug offenders, nearly half were serving time for trafficking in hard drugs, such as heroin. Thus, only 6 per cent of the inmates were doing time for merely possessing a drug or trafficking in marijuana. The number of persons in prison for gambling is not reported, but could not exceed one per cent.

Others have argued that prison should be reserved for repeat offenders and not used for persons convicted for the first time. By and large, that is already the case. Less than one per cent of the inmates had never been sentenced before; 28 per cent had served four or more prior sentences.

Prison inmates are, as one would expect, disproportionately drawn from among the poorly educated and those with low income. About half are black (in 1960 only a third were) and most never finished high school. Contrary to what one might suppose, inmates are not typically unemployed during the month preceding their arrest. Two-thirds were employed, and almost all of these said they were employed full time. Of those unemployed, the majority said they had not been looking for work and did not want work.

THE other way society can alter its prison capacity is by changing the amount of time the average inmate serves. The shorter that period, the more space each year for additional inmates. Unfortunately, no good figures are available on time served by inmates of all state prisons. We do have such data for certain jurisdictions, however, and we can make an estimate of it for prisons generally. Overall, the length of time served in prison seems to have remained pretty much the same over the last decades or so: for the average inmate, about two years (he may be sentenced to much longer terms, but offenders are actually incarcerated for no more than one-third to one-half of their nominal sentences). This would suggest that nothing has changed. But that is a mistaken inference. Recall that the average prisoner is more likely today to be a murderer or robber and much less likely to be a burglar or auto thief. If time served has remained constant, it can only mean the time served in prison for more serious offenses, such as murder and robbery, has become less.

It is not clear, of course, whether any changes in time served were the result of judicial decisions. Other agencies, such as parole boards, can and do decide how long a person will stay in prison whatever the initial sentence. How this has changed is vividly shown by the experience of the federal correctional system. Federal judges, like their state counterparts, sent fewer persons to prison in 1970 than in 1960—30 per cent fewer, as it turns out—despite the rising crime rate. For those they did imprison, however, they issued longer sentences: in 1960, average sentence length was about 27 months, but in 1970 it was over 38 months. At the same time, however, the proportion of the sentence actually served fell—from about 64 per cent in 1960 to 51 per cent in 1970. As a result, the ac-

* Source: 1960—Federal Bureau of Prisons, "Characteristics of State Prisoners, 1960," *National Prisoner Statistics*, Table P4, page 10.

1974—Estimates derived from National Criminal Justice Information and Statistical Services, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, "Survey of Inmates of State Correctional Facilities, 1974," *National Prisoner Statistics* (SD-NPS-SR-2), Table 4. Because 1974 figures are estimates from a sample survey, they have been rounded off to the nearest hundred.

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tual time served remained about constant (around a year and a half) despite the fact that federal prisons in 1970 had a larger proportion of inmates who had committed more serious crimes, such as robbery, assault, and firearms-law violations.

IN SUM, we have adapted to higher crime rates by reducing the proportions of arrested persons going to prison (a pattern that recently may have been reversed), changing the mix of prison populations to emphasize serious over less serious offenders, keeping more or less constant the average amount of time served despite the fact that those in prison are guilty of more serious crimes, and allowing overcrowding to occur in many systems (especially in the South).

From many different, and even competing, perspectives, this has not been a rational response. If you believe that increasing the percentage of convicted offenders who are imprisoned will deter others from committing crimes, then a declining prison population and a declining imprisonment rate are mistakes. If you believe that more serious offenders should be kept off the streets longer, then a constant sentence length at a time when the prison population is coming disproportionately to consist of serious offenders is a mistake. If you believe that prison conditions are inhuman and indecent, then allowing overcrowding to occur in many states makes difficult or impossible the provision of higher levels of privacy and amenity. If you believe that "white-collar" criminals should be given prison sentences more frequently (either to deter others, to exact retribution, or to prevent the burden of prison from falling overwhelmingly on the poor and the black), then maintaining a limited prison capacity is a mistake, because white-collar (and other nonviolent) offenders will inevitably be displaced by blue-collar, violent ones. (Between 1960 and 1970, the number of persons in federal prison who were convicted of income-tax violations, embezzlement, fraud, and forgery declined while the number convicted of robbery increased.)

In short, increasing the capacity of our prison system is consistent with, if not indeed mandated by, a variety of policy goals that are often thought to be in opposition. It is not clear, of course, that merely having more "prisons"—and by that I mean all variety of facilities, community-based as well as maximum-security—will induce judges to use them more, parole boards to leave serious offenders in longer, or wardens to devote more effort to producing decent and humane environments. It would seem, however, that for the nation as a whole, if not for every state, the more or less fixed capacity of our prison system has been allowed to become a major constraint on, or excuse for, sentencing policy. William A. Shaffer of MIT has shown, through a careful analysis of the Massachusetts criminal-justice system, how this constraint operates in practice. In that state, he suggests, the shortage of prison capacity is the critical variable affecting the ability of the system to lower crime rates—much more so than police resources or court decisions.

The cities and states, of course, are often pinched for money, in some cases led by officials who believe that only harsh correctional systems are of any value, and usually caught in the middle between citizen groups that want less crime and those that want to block the construction of new prisons. The problem will become more acute as prison populations continue to rise, as they have begun to do. I suggest that the next national administration, whether motivated principally by a concern for victims or inmates, has an obligation to examine the federal relationship to the state-prison system and to think seriously about the desirability of supplying both more funds for expansion of that system and higher standards for its operation.

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Israeli Culture and the Jews

Robert Alter

THERE are signs that since the early 70's significant changes have been taking place in the perception many American Jews have of their relation to Israel. Even before the traumatic, and catalyzing, experience of the Yom Kippur War, voices had been raised calling for a reassessment of American Jewry's political stance toward Israel and of the general acceptance of Israel as the primary cultural center of the Jewish people. Reassessment, however, has in many instances been intimately associated with reawakening. There has been, I would say, a more pronounced degree of involvement (perhaps especially among intellectuals) with Israel on the part of American Jews, accompanied by a greater readiness to exercise critical freedom from official Zionist positions in defining a relationship with Israel.

This whole phenomenon, though it could well have important consequences, is unfortunately too multifaceted to get very clearly into focus: there is, after all, a good deal of cultural stratification among American Jews, which in turn is cut across by an unevenly distributed spectrum of postures of Jewish identity, from total estrangement to ambivalent nostalgia to various forms of religious or political involvement. It becomes rather difficult, then, to make any confident generalizations about how a collective body called "American Jewry" perceives its relation to Israel. The difficulty is compounded by the fact that one may relate alternately, or simultaneously, to Israel as a political entity with its set policies (or non-policies), to Israel as a distinctive cultural sphere, a religious idea, a simple nexus of kinship.

These various aspects of the Jewish state are of course intricately entangled with one another, but in order to make the confusion of data at least partly manageable, I would like to concentrate specifically on Israeli culture and whatever effects it might have on American Jewry. Since what I have in mind is serious original cultural activity, not Zionist commemorative medallions or olive-wood and copper Israeli kitsch, the segment of American Jews I am thinking of will run from high-middlebrow to highbrow. That in itself may seem a problem because intellectuals have conventionally been deemed the most notoriously "alienated" of American Jews, but there are some grounds for suspecting that this is no longer as true as it once perhaps may have been. Before any consideration, however, of Diaspora response to Israeli culture, some reflections will be in order on the character of that culture. Necessarily, I shall be dealing with culture created in the medium of language because it is difficult to talk about a distinctively Israeli culture in science and mathematics, or even in music and the visual arts.

Among classic Zionist thinkers, there is really only one influential figure who proposed a general theory of permanent cultural relationship between Israel and the Diaspora, and that is Ahad Ha-am. (Ahad Ha-am, "One of the People," is the pen-name of Asher Ginzberg, 1856-1926, an essayist, polemicist, and editor, who had a dominating importance in the circle of Odessa Hebraists around the turn of the century, during the formative phase of Zionism.) It may be useful briefly to review Ahad Ha-am's conception of Israel's cultural role vis-à-vis world Jewry both because it continues to be influential in official Israeli circles—despite two generations of intellectual critiques of his ideology and a good deal of popular impatience with it—and because as an ideal model it can provide a measure of what has actually happened culturally after almost three decades of Jewish statehood.

Ahad Ha-am thought that the essential task of a renewed Jewish nation on the soil of Israel was to serve as a "spiritual center" for world Jewry. By "spiritual" (*rukhani*) he meant nothing really theological but rather a center of cultural creativity with a strong ethical tincture extracted from the noblest values of classical Judaism. In a well-known 1903 essay, "The Spiritual Renaissance," and abundantly elsewhere, he insisted on the absolute primacy for Zionism of what he called *kultura*. The founding of a single school of higher learning, he argued, of a single academy for language and literature, was a more important step in

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the realization of Zionism than the creation of a hundred new settlements. The extravagance of such assertions derives, I would guess, from a lurking fear in Ahad Ha-am that the whole fabric of Jewish national unity was disintegrating, and that without a powerful cultural center in Israel Jews would quickly lose all touch both with each other and with their common heritage. Israel, in Ahad Ha-am's rather simplistic model of the dissemination of culture, was to serve as a "center of imitation" for Diaspora Jewry, just as in early cultures tribal or national values were perpetuated by many individuals imitating the exemplary central figure of a founding leader or hero. In his view, moreover, it was crucial that the cultural center be a Hebrew one, for he was convinced that no people could produce an authentic culture, one that was not ultimately apologetic or slavishly imitative, in a borrowed language, and Hebrew was for him the only truly indigenous Jewish language. With such a Hebrew center, the far-flung Jewish communities of the Diaspora could reflect the distinctive traits of their various cultural contexts and yet find in the Land of Israel a "refining crucible and unifying bond" for national consciousness.

In regard to Ahad Ha-am's program for a renascent Hebrew culture in Israel, far more of it has been realized than any sane observer would have dared to predict back in 1903. Urgent historical necessity, of course, soon demonstrated that the enterprise of physical settlement to which Ahad Ha-am referred so dismissively in fact had a desperate priority, and that the political aims of the Herzlian Zionism which Ahad Ha-am criticized were indispensable for Jewish survival in the face of genocide and its aftermath. Through all these decades of upheaval, however, the work of cultural renaissance continued unabated. By the late 20's Hebrew, almost entirely limited to literary usage when Ahad Ha-am wrote his major essays, was firmly reinstated, quite uncannily, as the living vernacular of the Jews of Palestine. Israel of the 70's has more academies, research institutes, and schools of higher learning than even Ahad Ha-am could have dreamed of (sometimes, it seems, more than Israeli taxpayers are willing to support); original scholarship that commands international attention goes on in a wide variety of fields, and particularly, of course, in the sundry areas of Jewish studies; a body of new Hebrew poetry and fiction has been produced which, at least at its peaks, deserves comparison with the best serious writing elsewhere. Israel, in other words, despite its smallness and its geopolitical isolation, has succeeded in becoming a major intellectual center.

To be sure, very little of this Hebrew cultural activity has the explicit ethical thrust that Ahad Ha-am envisaged—were he alive today, he would undoubtedly fulminate, for example, against the "nihilism," "indecency," and "sterile aestheticism" of contemporary Hebrew literature, as, indeed, some of his spiritual heirs have done. In any case, the moralism of Ahad Ha-am's program must have been its most unconvincing aspect even in his own time, the point where his argument, buoyed up by fine phrases, visibly floated off from any discernible historical realities into a vacuum of secular homiletics.

But apart from such vague ethical aspirations, if the program for a renaissance of Hebrew culture in Israel has been fulfilled—perhaps one should say, astonishingly fulfilled—the nature of that culture and its impact on Jewish consciousness have proved to be rather different from Ahad Ha-am's expectations. Let me offer one very recent Hebrew text as an illustration of what has happened to these expectations, a text that is instructive both because it nicely articulates the cultural consciousness of an Israeli literary intellectual in the 70's, and because it actually comments wrily on Ahad Ha-am's notion of Zionist culture. In the Spring 1976 issue of the literary journal, *Siman Qriah,* there appears a group of experimental poems, some of them quite remarkable, attributed to a fictitious Hebrew poet, Gaby Daniel. Self-avowed cosmopolitan, a Russian-born Israeli living in Holland, Gaby Daniel wanders through the galleries of Amsterdam, pondering the possibilities of art and poetry, trying to catch the shimmering Dutch landscape in a net of iridescent words, tied to his Israeli past by the strong and subtle bond of the Hebrew language, which somehow imposes itself upon him before all the other languages he knows as the envelope of his most intimate imaginings. In "Galleries," the third poem of the group, the poet scrutinizes some white-on-white abstract paintings. Then he reflects on his own languages as an Israeli and cosmopolitan in the face of this ultimate visual language of minimal art:

How could I have learned
So many tongues
That have no translation?
The pelting shower
Of colors and lines and juttings and texture
(Isn't this the *kultura*
Ahad Ha-am dreamt of:
For Israelis to travel
In groups and alone
To the galleries of Amsterdam
And learn that the interpretation of poems
Even in the language of the Hebrews
Is a trumped-up nuisance!)

The amusing juxtaposition of Ahad Ha-am's *kultura* and an avant-garde gallery in contemporary Amsterdam is a suggestive one because it so vividly illustrates, from the viewpoint of a post-ideological Israeli, that part of the intellectual baggage of classical Zionism which has not traveled

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well over the years. Ahad Ha-am believed profoundly in the uniqueness of Jewish culture, a uniqueness that had crystallized above all in the Hebrew language; and from time to time in his writing one glimpses an underlying assumption, perhaps camouflaged in the interests of "progressive" thinking, that uniqueness meant ultimate superiority. Indeed, the whole idea of a linguistically grounded loyalty of Diaspora Jewry to a Hebrew center in Israel was predicated on a sense that Hebrew was, after all, the language of languages, in which a unique set of moral values had been transmitted to mankind and by a process of exegesis was continually refined through the ages. Ahad Ha-am's *kultura*, then, is exactly reversed in the experience of the Israeli tourist, who, confronted by European art, is forced to reject all grandiose national and rational perspectives, forced to recognize that any commentary (*perush*) on poem or artifact is *lahadam*—a cock-and-bull story. After this radical denial of the validity of exegesis, the poem concludes with the affirmation of an art beyond nationalism:

This is not a poem on earth and blood.
This is a poem on the wealth of the tongues of man.
For instance, in Amsterdam.

I have dwelt on this illustrative text by "Gaby Daniel" not because it represents any breakthrough in awareness but, on the contrary, because it so finely expresses a representative Israeli perception about Hebrew culture and its role in the world. Among living Hebrew writers, the only one I can think of who still preserves unambiguously a sense of Hebrew as the instrument of *ye'ud*, of a grand and unique destiny, is Uri Zvi Greenberg, now in his eighties, and someone who has been quintessentially a maker of poems "on earth and blood." Certainly all of the Hebrew writers I have known personally have seen their language simply as one of the tongues of man, their own inherited "for instance" in a realm of many possible instances of cultural expression. The old Zionist sense of a *message* to convey to the Jewish people and to the world is almost nowhere evident in the pages of contemporary Hebrew literature.

IF THIS is, in very broad terms, the nature of self-awareness in the creators of Hebrew culture today, what impress does that culture have on the Jews of the Diaspora; and in particular on American Jews? The whole phenomenon of a reborn Hebrew culture in an autonomous Jewish state is probably still too new to permit any accurate assessment of what its general impact will be in the long run. One may, however, hazard a few guesses, keeping in mind that the situation we are trying to grasp is at this moment in history still a highly fluid one.

I have a sense that over the past dozen years, while the attitude of the masses of American Jews has remained one of unquestioning loyalty to the Jewish state and relative indifference to its serious cultural life, there has been a gradual but significant shift in feeling among intellectuals. If one had surveyed the American Jewish intelligentsia a decade or more ago, I suspect one would have found that, apart from a fairly small minority of committed Zionists, there was a general lack of interest in Israel, a disavowal of connection based on the universalist's fear of parochialism, perhaps on uneasy memories of Sunday-school classes and Jewish National Fund collection boxes, of parents attending Israel Bond dinners, and the like. The typical Jewish intellectual of that period would of course have affirmed Israel's right to exist as a haven for refugees, a democracy in the Middle East, a place where social experiments like the kibbutz were undertaken, but these were concessions of intellectual charitableness.

By the end of the 60's and even more noticeably after the October 1973 war, the prevalence of this self-conscious indifference to Israel had dwindled considerably. Many were now willing to admit not exactly to a sense of loyalty to the Jewish state but at least to a feeling of involvement in its precarious fate. There was now also a modest but growing curiosity about the cultural productions of Israel, extending to the American intellectual community at large.

In the last four years, for example, the Hebrew novelist Amos Oz has become a fairly well-known writer in America, his translated novels regularly receiving enthusiastic reviews in both general and intellectual journals. I happen to think that Oz is a very good writer and deserves the success he has won, but fifteen years ago such acclaim for an Israeli writer would scarcely have been possible, as the nearly total neglect of S. Y. Agnon at the time by American literary intellectuals should suggest. Or again, when Gershom Scholem's *Sabbatai Sevi* was published in English translation in 1973, it was greeted on all sides as a major work, with journals like the *New Yorker* and the *New York Review of Books* devoting long discussions to the book and to Scholem's intellectual enterprise. There had been, clearly, a geological shift in consciousness from the previous intellectual generation when a critic like Lionel Trilling, writing in a symposium at a moment when Scholem's *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* had recently appeared in America, could sweepingly suggest that there was no voice committed to Jewish life that spoke with any intellectual authority.

What I would like to stress is that the authority of intellectual and artistic voices coming out of Israel and the Zionist experience does not finally differ in kind from the authority of the abstract canvases that confront "Gaby Daniel" as a revelation in Amsterdam. Western Jewish intellectuals

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now by and large seem at last free from Jewish prejudice against the culture of Israel and so are open to being moved by the force of its creative idiom, but they are not looking for a message, any more than the Hebrew artists and thinkers themselves are seeking to impart one. Hebrew writing and a good deal of Hebrew historical scholarship —as in fact the work of both Scholem and Oz bears witness—have very frequently been devoted, like serious modern writing elsewhere, to an unflinching scrutiny of paradox, ambiguity, psychological and spiritual abysses, and it is precisely this quality of Israeli literary culture that engages the attention of intellectuals abroad, even as it disquiets Zionist loyalists. Amos Oz, the short-story writer Yehoshua, the poet Yehuda Amichai are read by American Jewish intellectuals with basically the same order of expectations that they would bring to the reading of, say, Borges, Calvino, Merwin, Robbe-Grillet. Whereas the old-line Zionist leadership, with Ahad Ha-am's thinking distinctly in the background, tended to envisage the renewed Hebrew culture in neo-prophetic terms, with all the nations going up to Jerusalem to seek instruction, our actual cultural situation, on both the Diaspora and the Israeli sides of the interchange, would appear to be one in which there is a "for instance, in Jerusalem," just as there is a "for instance, in Amsterdam," in Paris, or even in Tokyo.

AHAD HA-AM'S implicit assumption, then, of a unique source of value in Israel as the cultural center of the worldwide Jewish people must be regarded with the greatest suspicion. The Jewish state has certainly not become the "center of imitation" he imagined. Nevertheless, the existence of Israel has, I believe, made a significant difference in the cultural consciousness of most Diaspora Jews, and it is that which I would now like to explore. To take the full measure of the difference Israel has made, it will again be useful to go back in time and recall the peculiar perplexities of the Jewish condition before the realization of the Zionist program.

Modernity for Jews seems to have meant that for the first time the fact of being a Jew had become conceptually and psychologically problematic, demanding some sort of systematic definition and rationale. In the pre-modern period, Jews everywhere were adherents of a universalist monotheistic faith which determined the whole framework of their existence and which, unlike the two other monotheistic religions, was paradoxically linked with the historical destiny of a particular people, compelled by common ancestral memories and national aspirations. Once it became possible as a social fact for Jews to leave the enclaves in which they had lived in the lands of their exile, and once the authority of traditional faith began to erode, one was free to choose Judaism as a purely creedal commitment, as a national identity, or as some third entity. By the beginning of our own century, therefore, Jewish life had become a noisy marketplace of competing ideologies of Jewishness and post-Jewishness. According to one's preference, the Jews were an ethnic-cultural group with a natural place in the East European sphere (the Yiddishists); a strictly confessional group with national ties only to the countries they lived in (classical Reform Judaism); an avant-garde of the European revolutionary proletariat united by a common vernacular (the Bundists); an awkwardly anachronistic historical survival at last in the process of being absorbed by its enlightened surroundings (the assimilationists); an unhoused people for whom the historical moment had arrived to return to its national home (the Zionists). History often seems to provide the most savage refutations of false construals of historical process, and after Hitler and Stalin many of the ideologies that exercised the Jewish imagination early in the century seem painfully self-deceived or sadly irrelevant.

Allegiance to fixed principle, of course, dies slowly, perhaps especially among Jews. In the years after World War II, when America was becoming conscious, or self-conscious, of a new pluralism in its national life, there was much emphasis among Jews on their constituting a religious denomination that was a symmetrical part of the American pluralistic picture—Protestant, Catholic, Jew—but the last twenty years have made it increasingly clear both to Jews and to other Americans that the Jews are in many respects a stubborn anomaly in the American denominational arrangement. To put it bluntly, the so-called "dual loyalty" that made non-Zionists so uneasy seems to have become, for both Gentiles and Jews in America, a quietly acknowledged fact. There is still a tiny group of ideological anti-Zionists who conceive themselves as American citizens of the Mosaic persuasion, but they represent little more than the dying reflex, geographically displaced, of a 19th-century German-Jewish mentality. More commonly, one still finds both in America and Europe a generous sprinkling of ideological universalists, mostly but not exclusively of the Left, who believe that it is the historical vocation of the Jew to be a man of all nations, free of the claustral air of national loyalties and perspectives, a harbinger of the undifferentiated brotherhood of man. (One trouble with universalism as an ideological stance is that it is professed mainly by Jews, and in this last quarter of the 20th century, after all that has happened and in the face of rampant particularism all over the globe, it seems a peculiarly quixotic strategy for hastening the unity of mankind.)

Clashes among Jewish ideologies, then, can still easily occur, but the essential point here is that, for the first time since the beginning of the mod-

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ern period, there seems to be a fairly clear consensus about what the Jews are, and what they are, quite simply, is a people with a geopolitical center and a national language in Israel, and a membership (in fact, the large majority) scattered across the world. It is not that the Zionists of 1903 were in all respects so much more clairvoyant than their ideological antagonists, for we have only to read the daily newspapers to be reminded that the Zionist solution has opened a Pandora's box of frightful problems which no one knows how to handle. But what the Zionists did understand better than their opponents was the terms of the problem, the kind of entity that Jews emerging into modernity felt themselves and perhaps needed to be. Individual Jews could still opt to be religionists of various sorts, Yiddishists, Marxists, liberals, militant vegetarians, or what you will, but what bound them together now was a sense of belonging to one people with a set of valued historical memories and a strong sense of its prerogative to persist in history as a collective presence with a decent degree of autonomy.

Two recent and instructive illustrations of how pervasive this consciousness of peoplehood has become among American Jews are Irving Howe's *World of Our Fathers* and Saul Bellow's *To Jerusalem and Back.** Since the '73 war, Howe, despite his commitment to a universalistic socialism, has given public expression to a deeply felt concern as a Jew for the survival of Israel, and what is particularly interesting in this connection about his ambitious historical study of East European Jewish immigrants in New York is its implicit congruence with a Zionist view of Jewish existence. The East European immigration as Howe sees it was not merely a flight of individuals from persecution and deprivation but a more or less conscious drive to Jewish national renewal on American soil. Such a reading of modern Jewish history, both in its perception of the strength and solidarity of Jewish peoplehood and in its sense that modernity has been grasped by Jews as the occasion for the vigorous transformation of the conditions of collective Jewish existence, would not, I suggest, have come very readily to an observer of Howe's background without the existence of Israel.

Similarly with Saul Bellow's extraordinary new work of non-fiction in which an emotional and intellectual engagement with Israel and its problems has elicited from that writer his richest, most finely intelligent writing since *Herzog*. If one were to go back fifteen or twenty years, to the first great flourishing of noticeably Jewish writers on the American literary scene, it would be hard to imagine any of them, including Bellow himself, devoting this amount of time and intellectual energy to an exploration of Israel and the writer's relation to it. "I am an American, Chicago-born," *The Adventures of Augie March* proudly announced in its opening sentence, and a Jewish cultural realm beyond the American sphere of experience was nowhere on the imaginative horizons of that novel, a book that many saw as the signal beginning of an American Jewish "literary renaissance." Now, over two decades later, Bellow is impelled to encounter Israel not from the distance of intellectual tourism but out of a sense of intimate connection, which leads both to a warmly understanding evocation of the Israeli scene and to an acutely felt apprehensiveness about the grave quandaries that Israel faces.

I have contended that a consensus of world Jewry now recognizes, without much ideological fuss and bother, an essential bond of peoplehood connecting Jews everywhere, whatever other allegiances they may have, and focused geopolitically in Israel. When one speaks of a "normal" people like the Italians or the French, it is clear that the boundaries of its distinctiveness, confined in any case within a geographical locus, are marked by a unifying language and culture, but what possible culture could be deeply shared by so disparate and dispersed a people as the Jews? If the Israelis—in contradiction to the contention of Georges Friedmann and others—persist, with very few exceptions, in regarding themselves as Jews, it is obvious that the Jews of the Diaspora are very far from being culturally Israelis. It will probably take at least a century before the real answer to this imponderable question begins to emerge, but perhaps a few observations on the anomalous linguistic situation of the Jewish people may point in the direction of a conceivable answer.

In the pre-modern Diaspora, the characteristic response of Jews to their double condition of isolation from and interaction with their various cultural environments was the creation of Jewish dialects that grew to be distinctive languages—Judeo-Arabic, Ladino, and, above all, Yiddish. In the relatively open societies where most Jews now live, without the pressure of social isolation, the impulse to create or perpetuate a Jewish dialect has disappeared, and some have argued that, deprived of a particular Jewish language, Jewish cultural distinctiveness in the Diaspora is doomed. A few observers have imagined in the practice of certain American Jewish writers the first signs of a new "Yiddish" forged out of the American language, but this seems, to put it mildly, fanciful.

Perhaps Ahad Ha-am was not so far off the mark in his stress on the necessity of a Hebrew center radiating its influence out to the Diaspora, though he had extravagantly excessive expectations both of the Hebrew language as a guarantor of values and of Diaspora Jewry's potential for serious devotion to Hebrew. At any rate, with the fading of Jewish Diaspora dialects, a new situation

* See Edward Grossman's review, beginning on p. 80—Ed.

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has imperceptibly developed since the creation of the state of Israel in which Hebrew has become the second language of the Jewish people outside the borders of Israel. Yet it is a bit peculiar as a second language because only a tiny minority knows it really well, while another, somewhat larger minority has a smattering of it.

Among American Jews there is no doubt that in the three decades since the political realization of Zionism Hebrew has been accorded a progressively more esteemed and secure place. One should not, however, fall into the trap, by listing institutions and selected statistics, of projecting a great renaissance of Hebrew in American Jewry. It is true that a few thousand children each year spend their summers in Hebrew camps; that Jewish day schools with intensive Hebrew programs are flourishing; that even the congregational religious schools have become more serious about the language; and that dozens of American universities now have active programs in Hebrew where a generation ago this was true of only a small handful of institutions. But when all this is compared, for example, to the Hebrew *gymnasia* of Poland and Lithuania in the 20's and 30's, or to the flourishing Hebrew press and original Hebrew literature in Russia before the revolution, it is clear that anything that might presently be called a Hebrew movement in America is a rather anemic affair. On the campus where I teach, though I might point with promotional pride to more than one hundred fifty students every term in Hebrew-language courses and to well-attended graduate seminars on the most complex topics of Hebrew literature, there remain four or five thousand Jewish students untouched by any concern for Hebrew, and even of those hundred fifty, the majority will end up with about enough command of the language to communicate with a Tel Aviv taxi driver, perhaps to decipher a newspaper for new immigrants printed with vowel-points in simplified style. The study of Hebrew for most would seem to have less practical than ritual value, as the expression of a strong allegiance through an effort of learning.

It is probably unrealistic to hope for much more than this from North American Jewry, and perhaps even less can be expected from the Jews of Western Europe. What seems to me important, however, is not the statistical prevalence of Hebrew but rather the status it has achieved, the role that the *idea* of the language now plays in the consciousness of Jews. Half a century ago, Hebrew was still thought of by most Jews as a vestige, whether cherished or despised, of the rabbinic, "clerical" past, or, alternately, as the possession of a small intellectual elite of Hebraizing ex-yeshivah students, linguistic diehards determined out of nationalistic passion or sheer atavism to swim against the mainstream of modern history. All that, of course, has radically changed through the accomplished fact of Hebrew as the living language of a restored Jewish commonwealth. Though perhaps no more than a fifth of the world's Jews actively use Hebrew, it has become—*faute de mieux*, from a Yiddishist point of view—the acknowledged language of the Jewish people. The authority of the language, once so much in dispute, is now conceded even by those who have no real knowledge of it, and increasingly, I think, Jews who want to be in touch with what their people is up to as well as where it has come from will have to acquire some competence in Hebrew. The language of the Jewish past has become the instrument of the Jewish present, and so a degree of historical continuity as well as future cultural coherence has become more feasible.

The fate of Hebrew in the Soviet Union is an instructive case in point. In the first years after the revolution, those Hebrew writers who chose to remain in Russia published two slender literary miscellanies singing the praises of the new Communist era, but by the mid-20's Soviet authorities had banned Hebrew as a counterrevolutionary language—and quite rightly, from their Marxist-Leninist viewpoint, for whatever professions of loyalty to the revolution the Hebrew writers might make and even deeply feel, their commitment to their language implied a national allegiance finally incompatible with the intransigent Russian nationalism that called itself Soviet socialism. Through the grim years of Stalinist terror, a few brave souls continued to write clandestinely in Hebrew, sometimes smuggling their work out for publication in Palestine—like the gifted lyric poet, Haim Lensky, who perished in an NKVD camp in the early 40's. As part of the national reawakening triggered by the Six-Day War—"when we realized," as I heard one ex-Soviet Jew say, "that the Russians were aiding the enemies of our people"—an underground network was created for the study of Hebrew, working with smuggled texts and tapes and radios surreptitiously receiving Voice of Israel broadcasts. Now, the acquisition of Hebrew was of course a practical step in preparation for emigration to Israel, but I would suggest that it has meant much more than that to Soviet Jews. Especially after 1967, many thousands of them (though by no means the majority) felt themselves to be Jewish nationals who had been till then deprived of their national language and culture, and they were willing to begin literally with *aleph bet*, at the risk of their freedom and peronal security, because the Hebrew language was the distinctive voice of the people they had come to affirm as their own.

In more normal national circumstances, language is of course a powerful unifying element. For the world's Jews, who share a second language rather than a mother tongue, it is a source of

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unity in some respects and division in others. (A Russian Jew may discover a deep sense of connection with his people in the arduous effort of acquiring Hebrew, but then a Jewish intellectual in New York or Paris is surely separated in a profound way from his counterpart in Tel Aviv by the fact that the latter thinks and writes in Hebrew.) The present status of Hebrew among Jews, then, is less a reflection of its effectiveness as a unifier than the result of a prior consciousness of national unity. That consciousness in turn is the product of historical causes too multiple and complex to analyze here—including, most obviously, not only the establishment of the state of Israel but the Holocaust and the catastrophic failure of Marxist messianism as a road to salvation for Jews—but evidence for the new sense of unity can be found in many directions, especially since 1967.

An Ahad Ha-am writing in the 70's, then, might perhaps not be so anxious about the danger of the Jewish people's falling apart, though he might well be concerned about the direction in which it was moving. Now that Jewish national existence has again assumed a local place and habitation, its inner divisions, its moral and political confusions, its constant precariousness, have become all too evident within a highly concentrated arena. Solidarity of consciousness means not only shared strength but also shared vulnerability, and the shock waves, for example, of national hysteria, disorientation, demoralization, which recent events have produced in Israel have been felt in the far reaches of the Diaspora as well.

THE Jews seem to have been "chosen" for a particularly difficult, dangerous relationship with history. The achieved consciousness of peoplehood, grounded in national autonomy, provides no easy way out of these difficulties and dangers—indeed, in some ways it multiplies their reverberations through the body of world Jewry. What Zionism has given Jews is not a clear-cut solution but a way of living dangerously in history with a modicum of honor, without crippling self-doubt, without supine acquiescence in the role of the helpless victims of historical forces. To this end, it was necessary for Jews to attain the awareness that they were not merely disparate individuals, co-religionists, sharers of a common ethnic or racial heritage, but members of a people that, like any other, had a right to its own political and cultural life among the nations of the earth. For all the uncertainties and ambiguities of our relationship with Israel, it seems that the pressures of history have at last forced this awareness home to large numbers of American intellectual Jews.

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Sinyavsky's Art

Dan Jacobson

Lilith: I think there is more
sorrow in the world
Than man can bear.

Nubian: None can exceed their
limit, lady:
You either bear or break.

—Isaac Rosenberg, *The Unicorn*

Our consciousness fills up all the space available to it, with whatever materials are at hand. It cannot do otherwise. If circumstances proffer it peace, comfort, the ordinary chances of domestic existence (which has its own surprises and vertigoes), then it will make its world of these. If you have small grievences, they will occupy the entire "grievance space" within you. With ambitions, likewise. Fears, too. The mayor of a small town, taking his oath of office for the first time, feels himself to be at one with the great figures of the world, a presence in history. His son, sitting at midnight in the only eating place in town which is still open at that hour, sees himself as a desperado, a night owl, a man utterly without illusions. The *bien-pensant* intellectual in the metropolis feels the panic of exposure at the thought of being out of step with his fellows on any important issue. The child who puts on a new pair of shoes is so bedazzled by their shine he imagines everyone in the street to be looking at him. These examples have not been chosen simply in order to be ridiculed. On the contrary. Which of us doesn't remember the excitements and shames of childhood as the most intense of our lives, though the occasions for them may now seem to us trivial or absurd?

But if our circumstances change suddenly? If the world proves itself to be quite other than the place we had previously imagined it to be? If fate or our own choice plunges us suddenly into a war, a natural catastrophe, a prison? Or into a hospital?

> What is so disconcerting is not so much this other reality in itself, as the mere possibility of its being so near that you only have to make one step to cross over into a new existence just as self-contained and valid as the previous one; and thus find the thought of a plurality of worlds confirmed with a terrifying suddenness.

This passage was written by Abram Tertz (Andrei Sinyavsky) in a letter to his wife, while serving a seven-year sentence in a prison camp for "anti-Soviet activities"—i.e., for publishing his works abroad without government permission. Ironically enough, he is referring here not to his confinement but to his transfer from the prison camp to a hospital, after serving the first five years of his sentence. The key word in the passage, it seems to me, is *valid*: in it there lies at least a hint of why some men are able to "bear," in Rosenberg's phrase, while others "break." To accept wholly the validity, the thereness, the truth of this new world and to use it as the material for a new consciousness, to fill up the available imaginative space with the new circumstances into which one has been thrust—this, in a moment of cataclysmic change, can be not natural or inevitable at all, but rather an act of great moral fortitude. The paradox, however, is that by doing so one may be able to retain a genuine continuity with the person one was before; whereas to see the new life only as an affront, an imposition, a totally uncalled-for misfortune and act of unfairness (even if it is, or especially if it is, the consequence of an injustice), to cling to all one was before and all one was entitled to before—that in fact may be to "break," to cease to be. Which goes some way, perhaps, to explain why Rosenberg could write with such stoicism out of the trenches of World War I, and why Tertz/Sinyavsky can say wearily a few pages later in the book, *A Voice from the Chorus*,* which has been put together from his prison letters:

> Notions like "human dignity" or "the inviolability of the person" are to my mind a kind of gobbledegook, part of a generally accepted jargon or code serving the same sort of practical convenience as exclamatory phrases such as "you don't say!" or "goodness gracious"—which are all very well in polite conversation, but make little real sense and cannot be taken very seriously. At bottom there is no such thing as "personal dignity." In some book or other great indignation is expressed at the fact that Plato was sold into slavery. Plato—into slavery!? But why not? What more suited to Plato?

In other words, all the pieties that have seemed suitable for one stage of one's life, and for the constructions one has made of it, have to be jettisoned too, like so much worthless baggage, if the self is to bear the sudden burdens put upon it. To believe in "human dignity" while sitting in a comfortable armchair, and in "the inviolability of the person" after a very good meal, requires no special effort. But it is an act of moral heroism to discard such beliefs in order to be able to see more clearly and to accept more fully what one has become—in this case as a direct result of challenging a despotic power which Sinyavsky knew to be far stronger than himself.

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* Translated by Kyril Fitzlyon and Max Hayward, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 528 pp., $10.00.

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A Voice from the Chorus is as surprising a book to come out of prison as could be imagined. Before saying more about it, however, I should mention that I have read it under the prodigious shadow, as it were, of the two volumes of Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago*, and alongside two other prison books of a more familiar kind. The first of these is the smuggled *Prison Diaries* of Edward Kuznetsov,* who, having served a seven-year sentence for dissident activities in his youth, still has a decade of his current fifteen-year term in a Soviet "special regime" labor camp to live through; the second, *Bandiet: Seven Years in a South African Prison* by Hugh Lewin,† who has finished his sentence and is now living in England. (*"Bandiet"* is Afrikaans prison slang for a convict.) Both these books, which deserve more than passing mention, are written by men who committed, for political reasons, acts which in any society would be regarded as criminal: Kuznetsov was involved in the abortive "Leningrad hijacking," when a group of Jews who had been refused exit visas for Israel tried to leave the Soviet Union by seizing a plane on the ground, with the intention of flying it to Finland; Lewin had taken part with others in various acts of sabotage (against government installations only, not against persons) in protest against the South African government's racial policies.

Both books make upsetting reading; both of them, together with Solzhenitsyn's, also enable one better to understand how much Tertz/Sinyavsky has deliberately chosen to leave out of his. Inevitably, Kuznetsov and Lewin write much of their interrogations and trials; of the fate of their fellow conspirators and their relationships with the criminals among whom they are flung; of their feuds over the privileges (mail, visits, food, books) which are given or denied them according to the whims of the authorities. To note detailed differences and similarities between the experiences of the two men would be as depressing as it is pointless: though they write from opposite ends of the earth they are, after all, describing similar institutions, in which the same corruptions and perversions abound, the same types come to the top and rule those beneath them in much the same manner. In general, one can say that once his very rough interrogations were over, Lewin was treated more humanely than Kuznetsov; and that the sentence imposed on him for what he had done was much less severe than that given to Kuznetsov for what he had failed to do. (The latter was in fact sentenced to death; this sentence was commuted only after worldwide protests.) On the other hand, had Lewin been black, he would have had a very different story to tell, as the glimpses he had of the treatment meted out to black prisoners clearly show (black and white are of course strictly segregated in South Africa's prisons).

A Jewish reader cannot help noticing, in passing, how loudly the Jewish bee buzzes in the bonnets of the servants of both these regimes, which are so far apart in space, history, and ideology. That Lewin is in fact the son of an Anglican clergyman did not, for example, inhibit one of the Special Branch men who was knocking him about from shouting at him, *"Jood, Jood, vanaand is jy dood, dood!"* (Jew, Jew, tonight you're dead, dead). Kuznetsov was arrested on a "Zionist" charge, so one would expect the Jewish issue to loom large in his dealing with the authorities. It does. It keeps the prisoners busy too. According to Tertz/Sinyavsky, who is not Jewish, a virulent anti-Semitism is almost universal in the camps, on every level.

Indeed, given the length of time Kuznetsov's sentence still has to run, the anti-Semitism in the camps, and the quixotic and incorrigible insolence which he shows to everyone around him who rouses his wrath, and especially to those in authority over him, the reader can only wonder, as he closes the diary, whether its author will ever emerge from the abyss to which the Soviet government has consigned him.

The authors of the two books I have just described are as direct as they can be about their own experience. This is true, too, of Solzhenitsyn in *The Gulag Archipelago*. There is so much that can be said about *The Gulag Archipelago* that a simple acknowledgment of its presence followed by a discreet silence seems the most prudent way of dealing with it. However, I do want to make just one point about it which has perhaps been too little noticed. Among so much else he has done, Solzhenitsyn has invented in this book a new literary form. Its alternation between autobiography and general history, chapter by chapter, section upon section, is something that to my knowledge has never been done before; certainly not on anything approaching this scale. To reconstruct the unrecorded, forbidden past of an entire generation and, more, to excavate single-handedly one of the two greatest crimes of the century, would be an astonishing achievement in itself; so would it be to have given, with so much insight and such boisterous rage, the account of his arrest, his prisons, his camps, his trains, his jailers, his survival. But to have done both, to have brought the two together and to have maintained an equilibrium between them, as he manages to do with special success in the first volume, so that each part makes the other starker, clearer, more veracious, even more comprehensible (so far as such a story can ever be comprehended)—this is a feat quite without precedent. It is a striking fact that Solzhenitsyn's attachment to the Tolstoy of *War and Peace*, so evident in *The First Circle* and *August 1914*, actually justifies itself more completely here than in the works of fiction.

THE contrast with Tertz/Sinyavsky is extreme. Even the fact that he writes under an assumed name, "Tertz," while permitting his real name to appear alongside it, is an instance of the indirection of his literary method. The book is made up, as I have said, of passages from his letters to his wife, together with some brief diary entries composed after his release. The physical circumstances of his imprisonment hardly appear in it. Nothing is said about the reasons for his incarcera-

*Stein & Day, 254 pp., $8.95.
†Penguin (London), £0.95.

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tion. Apart from the occasional description of a look or a particularly striking encounter, the other prisoners are present only through a series of italicized and unexplained quotations of remarks overheard ("The Chorus"). These anonymous quotations, for which no contexts are given, are all brief, some consisting of just a few words; but the anthologies of them which punctuate the text are in many cases several pages long. Fragments of dialogue, boasts about past misdeeds, malapropisms, idle conjectures about the future or the meaning of life—the author obviously treasured some for their bizarre power and originality, others for their excruciating banality.

AT one point in his communings with his wife or with himself, the author points out that a line of verse consists "not only of the alternation of sounds, but even more the organization of pauses, the arrangement of silences and stillnesses." This remark can be extended to apply to his book as a whole. The camp, the conditions in which he is writing, the slow passage of time are all conveyed as much through the book's silences and stillnesses as through its words; that which it does not speak of is eloquently present. His extreme abstemiousness or frugality in this regard has a double effect: it puts into particularly sharp focus those sudden details of his daily existence which do appear; and it lends an extraordinary deliberateness and intensity to the reflections on other topics of which the book is largely composed. With reference to the first, for example, we become aware of the relentless, tormenting gregariousness of camp life through his quiet remark on how difficult he finds it to read a letter from his son when so many eyes are upon him; or through the wonder he expresses at the way in which the prisoners playing dominoes always have to shout out exactly the same things every time they put down their pieces. His head aches every time it is shaved; when he hangs a clean towel above his bed, "it was almost the equivalent of a spring cleaning."

For the rest, moving naturally in or out of such moments, in turn echoing or contradicting the utterances of the inane, savage chorus, there are aphorisms, *pensées* about art and history, recollections of childhood, passages of descriptive writing about natural phenomena, brief essays on works of literature like *Hamlet* or *Robinson Crusoe*, many pages transcribing myths and legends and analyzing (at excessive length, to my taste) various aspects of folklore. The man who emerges from all these is one of exceptional originality and independence of mind, great artistic power, unillusioned curiosity, and sardonic wit. Of his courage it is not necessary to speak.

Again and again, as one reads the serene, poignant paragraphs and little essays in the book on such a variety of topics, one finds oneself thinking: "To have written like that—there!" But each time the entire book then seems to reform itself in one's mind as a quiet reminder or rebuke: to be what it is, it had to be written—just there.

Let me illustrate:

> There is already an August darkness about things. The days are bright and hot—it is high summer. But on looking a little closer you see that the shadows in the evening are more opaque and somber, and even at midday the vegetation, now in full leaf, and the blue sky seem to have a fine gauze over them, a kind of darkish haze that drugs the senses and makes the air look as if it might come out at any moment in inky blotches. It is not in autumn or winter that death lays the eggs whereby all things will be wormholed, but now, in August. The job is done, the eggs are laid—in August.

Or this:

> An individual dear to one takes on substance not against a background of objects bearing no relation to him or her, but as an extension of them—they coalesce in a visible unity with the face that is so familiar. Not "Mummy is coming down the street," but the street takes on the shape of Mummy—she materializes out of her inchoate state, summoned forth at a moment's notice from a world as much part of her as her dress or coat. A child calls for his mother, however far she may be, in the certainty that this maternal principle animating the world of things will shine out on him, manifesting their inner essence as her presence: he has only to call. He is not, therefore, unduly surprised when his room turns into his mother or she peeps out, like the sun, from behind a cloud.

A Voice from the Chorus explains and entirely justifies its own form. But an interesting light is thrown on it, and on Tertz/Sinyavsky's earlier works, by a long essay, "The Literary Process in Russia," which he has recently published in the Russian emigré journal *Kontinent*.* In it he declares his opposition to "realism"—not the realism of the official Soviet writers, whom he regards as quite beneath notice, but precisely that of his fellow *samizdat* or underground writers. The danger facing *samizdat*, he says, is that it will assume "the role of a sort of whining complaints book, supposedly to be perused by the leaders (who don't give a damn anyway), or to be stored away in a cupboard until the advent of those better times when people will have learned to live by the light of the truth. . . . [It] will again be reduced to a recital of the torments we suffer and the remedies we offer in their place. . . . We must put a stop to our cringing and currying favor with that hectoring taskmaster—reality! After all, we *are* writers, artists in words." He pleads with his fellow writers to create instead "on this fertile, well-manured soil [of Russia] . . . something astonishing, something exotic."

In *A Voice from the Chorus* he has succeeded. To do it, he had to bear all the weight of the reality he had experienced. The last words of the book, written after his release, are: "But they will still go on and on. And while I live here, while we all live—they will still go on and on. . . ."

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* *Kontinent: The Voice of Soviet Dissent*, edited by Vladimir E. Maximov, Anchor/Arno, 196 pp., $10.00.

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Schoenberg's Survival

Samuel Lipman

THERE can be little doubt that this century's most consequential reputation in the field of serious music is that of Arnold Schoenberg. His is the only name of our time to occupy the same kind of niche in the history of music as that of the greatest composers of the past 250 years—Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Wagner, and Brahms—and it can be argued that his influence upon his successors has been greater than that of any of his predecessors save Beethoven and Wagner. For his work has done more than fundamentally change the course of music. The very act of listening to it has had the effect of altering the way in which all music, both later and earlier, has been heard. His compositions, moreover, have spawned not only fervent disciples and slavish imitators but, equally important, an opposition which by its ferocity and duration testifies to his power. And this is, and has been, consistently true despite the fact that, to this day, there has never existed any sizable audience for Schoenberg's major mature works.

This paradox ought to give us pause. One cannot easily find a similar separation of reputation and audience in the case of any other great musical figure. Of course, not every supreme master has been enthusiastically supported by the sophisticated audience of any given historical period. Fashions change, and complex works have often had tough sledding for some years after being written. The choral music of Bach—the *St. Matthew Passion*, for example—was slow in developing an audience; the late works of Beethoven took time to reach the devoted audience they now enjoy. But the audience for Bach's music developed *pari passu* with the widening consciousness of his general stature; Beethoven's *oeuvre* taken as a whole never lacked either influence or listeners. And in our own time there has been a rough equivalence between the fame of a Prokofiev or a Bartók and the desire of a concert-going public to hear their music. Even in the more complicated case of Schoenberg's only 20th-century rival, Stravinsky, his reputation does not really rest on his relatively unpopular post-World War I pieces; he is mainly famous and was first influential precisely for those pieces —*Firebird, Petrushka,* and *The Rite of Spring*—which music lovers have always most wanted to hear.

With Schoenberg, it is different. From his first entrance into the public world of music with *Verklärte Nacht* (1899), a piece inspired by a poem of Richard Dehmel, he began to win the respect shading into awe with which he has been regarded by an intellectual class of musicians and a musical class of intellectuals. Yet only this first major piece has gained solid repertory status, and that status it probably owes in large measure to its use in Anthony Tudor's mid-40's ballet, *Pillar of Fire*. Why this separation exists in Schoenberg's case between influence and audience invites analysis; such an analysis must of course be based upon a consideration of Schoenberg's musical career.

SCHOENBERG, born in 1874 to lower-middle-class Jewish parents in Austria, was as a musician largely self-taught. This fact may help to explain both the relative ease with which his personality was able to dominate and defy musical conventions so sacred to others, and also a certain feeling of personal alienation from the musical establishment which was never to leave him. He made maximum use of the limited instruction in composition he received, and with *Verklärte Nacht* he emerged at twenty-five as a fully developed master of the German romantic tradition of Wagner and Brahms, drawing with ease simultaneously upon Wagnerian freedom of form and harmony and Brahmsian control of abstract structure and contrapuntal device. What was remarkable about *Verklärte Nacht*—beside the unforced melodic beauty of the music—was the originality Schoenberg demonstrated in writing it for string sextet rather than the full orchestra which Richard Strauss, among others, was then using for the musical treatment of programmatic ideas (though Schoenberg later did a version for string-orchestra performance which is now more commonly played).

This piece, with its relative economy of means, was succeeded by a work scored for something more than 150 orchestral instruments, consisting of 35 woodwinds, 25 brass, 4 harps plus celesta, approximately 80 strings, and 16 percussion instruments including iron chains. In addition, the score employs a solo soprano, a mezzo-soprano or contralto, two tenors, a bass, and a speaker, as well as three four-part men's choruses and an eight-part mixed chorus. This musical extravaganza, lasting almost two hours, the *Gurrelieder,* is a song-cycle set to poems by the Danish writer Jens Peter Jacobsen. In essence, it amounts to an unstaged Wagnerian music-drama, but it uses its grand forces with subtlety and elegance rather than with the striving for mass effect which often characterizes the work of the other giants of this period, including even Mahler. Schoenberg manages here to achieve, through the employment of innumerable small motives, a dense and at the same time broadly lyrical thematic texture. The work, though composed in 1900 and 1901, was not completely

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orchestrated until 1911. About its enormous success when it was first performed in Vienna in 1913, Schoenberg later (1937) wrote characteristically:

> As usual, after this tremendous success I was asked whether I was happy. But I was not. I was rather indifferent, if not a little angry. I foresaw that this success would have no influence on the fate of my later works. I had, during these thirteen years, developed my style in such a manner that, to the ordinary concert-goer, *it seemed to bear no relation* to all preceding music. I had had to fight for every new work; I had been offended in the most outrageous manner by criticism; I had lost friends. And I stood alone in a world of enemies.

After *Gurrelieder* came the 1903 tone-poem *Pelléas and Mélisande*, also written on a large scale and then, in 1905, the *First String Quartet*, which marked a decisive turning point in Schoenberg's compositional career. As turning points do, this one looked backward as well as forward. It looked backward in its length (almost one hour) and in its employment of extreme chromaticism while retaining the framework of conventional tonality—the piece began and was listed as being in D-minor, and ended most properly in D-major. What looked forward was the piece's tendency to compress the musical material in a way that gave every moment the highest possible polyphonic density—Schoenberg himself quotes Mahler as saying of this quartet: "I have conducted the most difficult scores of Wagner; I have written complicated music in scores of up to thirty staves or more; yet here is a score of not more than four staves, and I am unable to read them."

More importantly, however, Schoenberg here significantly advanced the revolutionary development of treating all thematic material motivically, and subjecting it to a process of continuous variation. Themes were thus freed from their former role as repeated and therefore recognizable melody and given the new role of bits in a mosaic. The end result of this process too was to concentrate attention on each moment rather than upon the long-term direction and structure of the piece. The effect upon even a knowledgeable audience was well described by the title of Alban Berg's brilliant 1924 article, "Why is Schoenberg's Music So Difficult to Understand?," which uses the D-minor Quartet as its main example.

THUS by 1905 Schoenberg had, in *Gurrelieder*, exhausted the possibilities of the employment of enormous forces, and at the same time had, in the D-minor Quartet, exhausted the possibilities of internal complexity, if that complexity was to be achieved through the use of traditional musical means meant to be traditionally understood. If he wished to continue his forward progress, he would have to find a new direction. In his *Second String Quartet* (1907-08) he found it by adding, to the first quartet's emancipation of the thematic material, the emancipation of dissonance from the former rules governing its use; in addition, he now made it possible to hear these musical procedures in a quite new way by presenting them in a clear and transparent texture.

The first two movements of the *Second String Quartet*, though often on the border of tonality, are appealingly lyrical and very much in the elegant tradition of the classical string quartet; only the quotation in the second movement of the folksong *"Ach, du lieber Augustin"* with its following line *"Alles ist hin,"* suggests what is to come in the third and fourth movements. For both these latter movements involve the addition of a soprano voice to the strings of the quartet; the soprano sings two poems of Stefan George, *"Litanei"* and *"Entrückung"* (transcendence), which are typical of George's style in their representation of depression issuing in ecstasy. And in the last movement, after a thin and skittish opening hinting at the abandonment of tonality, the singer begins with the famous words, "I feel an air from other planets blowing," to an accompaniment often fiercely dissonant and always eerie. Though the piece ends both tenderly and tonally, the point has been made: the new music of the spheres will not possess the sweetness the astronomers traditionally had in mind.

SCHOENBERG, having felt this "air from other planets blowing," was now ready to write those pieces of his expressionist phase which Charles Rosen has correctly observed we have yet to come to terms with. Perhaps that is only a polite way of saying that these pieces—*Die Glückliche Hand* (1908-13), *Erwartung* (1909), and especially *Pierrot Lunaire* (1912)—remain essentially unacceptable to an audience of non-musicians, no matter how well-versed. Be that as it may, these compositions share a common climate of emotional disturbance, neurotic yearnings, and quasi-psychotic transport (heightened by Schoenberg's use in *Pierrot Lunaire* of *Sprechstimme*, a vocal style belonging more to the realm of speech than of sung notes). All of these pieces attempt directly to communicate emotional states seemingly unmediated by normal artistic criteria of form, restraint, and balance; in this the expressionist style of Schoenberg, most completely realized in *Pierrot*, closely mirrors the expressionist style of painting ascendant during the same period in Germany.

Schoenberg himself, at about this time, began to paint seriously, and in the same expressionist style. His painting was much admired by Kandinsky, and was shown at the *Blaue Reiter* exhibition in Munich in 1911; to the famous 1912 *Blaue Reiter* almanac Schoenberg contributed an essay ("The Relationship to the Text") oddly denying the importance of the words to which music was written, a composition (the 1911 *Herzgewächse*), and two self-portraits. Kandinsky, in a 1912 book of tributes to Schoenberg, was prescient in seeing the similarity in spiritual content between Schoenberg's painting and his new musical works.

The atmosphere of emotional disintegration prevailing in those works was conveyed not only by the texts Schoenberg chose to set, but also through the apparent loss of any relationship between music and words or of any relationship between the resulting music and the

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traditions of the past. All seems illusion and specter; even the work of this period which has proven the most accessible and communicative—the *Five Orchestral Pieces* (1909)—suggests the same mood in its looming, threatening music and in three of the titles which Schoenberg unwillingly at his publisher's request gave the individual pieces—*Vorgefühle* (Premonitions), *Vergangnes* (That Which Is Past), and *Peripetia* (A Sudden Turn of Events).

Actually, far from being formless, the writing of this music is often devilishly ingenious, exploiting the most sophisticated orchestral techniques and the most abstruse devices of traditional counterpoint. In *Pierrot Lunaire,* for example, when one of the poems describes how Pierrot finds a spot on the back of his coat caused by a moonbeam—something he must have seen in a mirror—Schoenberg uses inverted and mirrored musical figures with the greatest formal mastery. Yet these and similar technical devices, because of their extreme subtlety and complexity, could hardly be appreciated by even the most educated of listeners. When to this difficulty Schoenberg added the "free atonality" of the music—the rigorous avoidance of tonal suggestion and resolution—he propelled himself into a public void, beyond even scandal. And the consequences were significant not only for the public but for Schoenberg himself. For deprived of the organizational possibilities of tonality, Schoenberg was now finding extended music unless supported by a long text very difficult to write—a fact shown by the extreme brevity of the *Six Little Piano Pieces* (1911), his last work without text for more than a decade.

Schoenberg now entered a time of retirement from composition. From 1912 to 1921 he completed only one piece, the *Four Orchestral Songs* (1913-16). About the beginning of 1915 he also started work on *Die Jakobsleiter,* a massive oratorio on the subject of the need for prayer. The music resembles Schoenberg's pre-expressionist writing more than his later work; melodies have a longer sweep, harmonies are more tonal, the orchestra supports rather than competes with the *Sprechstimme* parts. But *Die Jakobsleiter* remained unfinished.

For what Schoenberg was really involved in during this period was the systematic rationalization of a new kind of music altogether. By the summer of 1921 he was able to tell a pupil: "I have made a discovery thanks to which the supremacy of German music is insured for the next hundred years." The discovery was "the method of composing with twelve tones related only to each other." This is what the world, against Schoenberg's objection, calls atonality. Music composed in accord with the tenets of this system is developed from an arbitrary succession of the twelve notes of the chromatic scale, this succession being available in four forms—its original order, its inversion (the turning of ascending intervals into descending intervals, and vice versa), its retrograde (the reversal of the notes, beginning on the last pitch and going to the first), and its retrograde inversion. The resulting succession of notes, called the series or row, may be transposed so that it begins on any step of the chromatic scale; from the possible 48 resultant series, the harmonic and melodic material for the piece is chosen and developed subject to the rule that all twelve notes or tones must be used before the series can be employed again.

It cannot in any ordinary sense be said that Schoenberg was driven to this discovery—which involved the final sacrifice of his considerable lyrical gift—by an openly felt desire to be a revolutionary. On the contrary, he wrote to a Swiss music lover in 1923:

> I may say that for the present it matters more to me if people understand my older works. . . . They are the natural forerunners of my later works, and only those who understand and comprehend them will be able to hear the latter with any understanding beyond the fashionable minimum. . . . I do not attach so much importance to being a musical bogeyman as to being a natural continuer of properly understood good old tradition!

This attitude to the past was vividly manifested in the partially twelve-tone works that Schoenberg, armed with his new musical law and thus again able to compose, now wrote: the *Five Piano Pieces* and the *Serenade* for seven instruments and baritone voice (both 1920-23), and the *Wind Quintet* (1924). For these compositions are classical in their proportions and in the economy of their means if not in their harmonic configuration and sound. Not only in the *Serenade* but also in the *Piano Suite* (1921-23) and the *Wind Quintet,* moreover, Schoenberg seemed, as the French avant-garde composer Gilbert Amy has pointed out, concerned with proving the place of serial music in such classical formal structures as the march, the minuet, the theme and variations, and the waltz.

This desire for historical vindication perhaps clashed with Schoenberg's necessarily rigid early application of the technique in whose use he was now rapidly gaining virtuosity and ease. In his next two major instrumental pieces, however, the *Suite* for piano, three strings, and three winds (1925-26) and the *String Quartet No. 3* (1927), Schoenberg not only retained his concern with classical forms but also began to employ his own discoveries in a way that now in itself seems classical. And in his first extended twelve-tone work for full orchestra, the *Orchestral Variations* (1926-28), he demonstrated a musical ingenuity reminiscent in its contrapuntal mastery of Bach's *Art of the Fugue*; indeed, as if in homage, Schoenberg quotes near the beginning of the piece the notes which are called in German by the letters of Bach's name.

THE last years of the 1920's were to see only one more major work from Schoenberg—an opera *Heute auf Morgen* ("From Today to Tomorrow"), a topical lighthearted spoof of contemporary notions of marriage—before he undertook what was perhaps his most significant project, the quasi-biblical opera *Moses and Aaron* (1930-32).

Moses and Aaron represents the high point of Schoenberg's life-long concern with the problem of Jewishness. Born into an assimi-

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lated Jewish family, he had been a Catholic as a child, and then he became a Protestant in his late teens. By the time he was forty, as his work on *Jakobsleiter* had suggested, he was growing more and more interested in religion and especially in prayer, and by the 1920's this concern had merged with his premonitions of the hellish torments in store for the Jewish people. An anti-Semitic incident at the beginning of his vacation in 1923 caused him to write his friend Kandinsky, in the course of turning down an invitation to teach at the *Bauhaus*, that in Germany the humanity of the Jews was being denied, and that he himself was unwilling to be one of the few Jews who because of intellectual distinction was tolerated. He was, he added, convinced that the Jewish people could "accomplish the task that their God has imposed on them! To survive in exile, uncorrupted and unbroken, until the hour of salvation comes!"

The first fruit of Schoenberg's thinking in this area was the play he wrote in 1927, *The Biblical Way*. The hero is a man named Max Aruns (i.e., Moses Aaron) who through personal force becomes the leader of a segment of the Jewish people and fails in his effort to establish a Jewish state because he fails to take the "biblical way" of complete reliance on the word of God. It was not a good play, but its main idea—the primary significance of man as the vehicle of God's word—was central to Schoenberg and was to achieve infinitely greater power and definition in the libretto he wrote for *Moses and Aaron* (first draft 1928).

In the opera Moses is unable to communicate his knowledge of the word of God; his stammer, a physical defect, exactly balances the people's spiritual weaknesses of superstition and susceptibility to magic. Moses thus must depend on Aaron's corrupt version of the truth as a means of reaching the people. The climax of the second act, the Dance around the Golden Calf, is a victory for Aaron and a defeat for Moses. At the end of this act Moses sinks to the ground exhausted saying, "O word, thou word that I lack." Schoenberg's music only goes as far as this point, but in the libretto for the third and final act (which Schoenberg did complete) Moses, having had Aaron arrested and bound, accuses him of betraying the idea of the one God and extends his charge to the people of Israel:

> Whensoever you went forth
> amongst the people and employed those gifts—
> which you were chosen to possess
> so that you could fight for
> the divine idea—
> whensoever you employed those
> gifts for false and negative
> ends
> that you might rival and share
> the lowly pleasures of strange
> peoples,
> and whensoever you had abandoned the wasteland's renunciation
> and your gifts had led you to
> the highest summit,
> then as a result of that misuse
> you were ever hurled back
> into the wasteland.

The last lines of the libretto belong to Moses and are addressed again to the people of Israel:

> But in the wasteland you are
> invincible and you shall
> achieve the goal:
> unity with God.

What Schoenberg does here is to present the conflict between Moses and Aaron as the essential battle which must be fought in every soul and at every time between the abstract and the concrete, between the eternal and the temporal, between God's word and man's words, and between God as an unimaginable idea and God as an all-too-palpable idol. To call this a dialectical battle which, properly approached, issues forth in a higher synthesis, as is so fashionable nowadays, is to ignore the fact that for Schoenberg, no less than for the Bible, one side—Moses—is right.

THERE can be no doubt that *Moses and Aaron* occupies a central position in Schoenberg's *oeuvre*. What remains unclear is whether that centrality is due to its stature as opera, as music, or as ethical and philosophical tract. The received opinion, I think, is plain. For example, for both the literary critic George Steiner and the historian of 20th-century music Karl Wörner, the music is primary. Steiner, after remarking on the importance of the work in the history of music, the theater, theology, and the relationship between Judaism and the European crisis, writes: "These aspects do not define or in any way exhaust the meaning of the work; that meaning is fundamentally musical." And Wörner rather more cautiously writes:

> Schoenberg's text should not be judged by literary standards alone. The actions and the words are intended as a basis for music . . . like Richard Wagner, [Schoenberg] wrote poetry for music. . . . The musical conception follows the words, shaping them into musical structures . . . while retaining their spiritual significance, the words are dissolved in the higher amalgam of musical form. The higher unity permits no separation or isolation of single elements. Here words and music must always be appreciated as a synthesis.

What Steiner and Wörner seem to be saying is that in this work, while the words and the music are equal, the music is more equal than the words. Though this formulation is infinitely consoling to intellectuals more comfortable worshiping art than God, it fails to take into account the actual character and quality of *Moses and Aaron*, and still more important, the internal evidence of the opera itself.

For all the wizardry Schoenberg shows in organizing, complicating, and scoring his musical material, little about the music (always excepting the initial decision to have Aaron sing while Moses speaks in *Sprechstimme*) is in itself memorable or significantly adds to, goes beyond, or deepens the opera's words or ideas. In hearing the opera we remember the story, the characters, and the idea easily, but the music remains only an accompaniment, a background to the drama of ideas. To talk of this phenomenon as a "higher unity," as Wörner does, is to make an *ad hoc* argument, valuable in this case only—for no operatic masterpiece comes to mind in which the characters and the ideas so overpower the music; it is only here that the

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music cannot really take care of itself.

The internal evidence of *Moses and Aaron* supports much the same point. Schoenberg's inability to supply the music for the final act, though he had already written the words and though he lived for almost two decades after finishing the music for the second act, is an overwhelming indication of the relative weights in his mind of his music and his words. It is likely that his inability to finish the music was presaged in his decision that Moses (except for one short optional passage) would speak in harsh and unyielding accents while Aaron sings in seductive and mellifluous tones. This decision was of immense importance, for it meant that no one could miss the difference between the stark word of God spoken by Moses and the temptations sung by Aaron. The second act, which culminates in a victory for Aaron and a defeat for Moses, can only be an incomplete ending, given the context of Schoenberg's thought. For the presentation of the opera to stop here—as it does on the available recordings and generally also in live performance—is to be false to everything we know of Schoenberg's thought.

The third act does fully represent Schoenberg's thought, for it gives the triumph to Moses and through him, the word. The message is plain. Moses's word has driven out Aaron's music. In the end the word of God, not the music of man, must be seen to prevail. It is of course quite possible Schoenberg hoped that he might find some way of reconciling this antinomy. Perhaps that is the meaning of his direction in the score that Moses *may* sing rather than speak the lines

Purify your thinking
Free it from worthless things
Let it be righteous

—perhaps he had it somewhere in mind to put in melody some or all of Moses's final words about the destiny of Israel. This we can probably never know. What we do know is that Schoenberg could not or would not find the music for Moses's triumph, and as a result we are inescapably left with the primacy of the word amid the impotence of music.

As Schoenberg stopped work on *Moses and Aaron,* Hitler was coming to power. One of Schoenberg's first acts in response to this event was publicly to rejoin the Jewish religion and the Jewish community in a private but publicized ceremony in a Paris synagogue in July 1933. He was now an exile from Germany, and soon to be one from Europe. The rest of his life was lived out as a witness to the downfall of the civilization—and the musical tradition—he had so labored to continue. He emigrated to America, he composed, he taught, he sickened, and in 1951 he died.

The pieces he wrote in the United States in the last seventeen years of his life remain of interest, if only in the context of his entire career. They include the *Violin Concerto* (1934-36), the *String Quartet No. 4* (1936), the *Piano Concerto* (1942), the *String Trio* (1946), and his last major composition, the *Fantasy for Violin and Piano* (1949). In addition, during this period he wrote several works set to texts which had great personal significance for him—the *Kol Nidre* (1938), Byron's *Ode to Napoleon* (1942), and his own text, *A Survivor from Warsaw* (1947).

These pieces of Schoenberg's American period do not follow an orderly line of development. They occupy several categories: some of them are rigorously serial in construction; some of them use twelve-tone procedures in such a way that tonality is often suggested; and finally a third category—including the *Suite* for string orchestra (1934), the *Variations* for organ (1941), and the 1942 *Theme and Variations* for wind band (also version for orchestra)—obviously aims at a more playable and listenable style. It is distressing, however, that whatever the stylistic approach, the verbal content or lack of one, or the general level of complexity of any of these pieces, the fate of all has been similar. They are admired from a musical distance not only by audiences but also by most musicians, they are either unheard or, once having been heard, are relegated to the area of virtuous tasks once performed, sufficiently performed.

The music written in the few years immediately before Schoenberg's death includes one other important category—that of three choral pieces on religious subjects set to biblical or quasi-biblical texts. The first of these is an *a capella* setting of Dagobert Runes's poem, "Three Times a Thousand Years," a work dealing with the destruction of the Temple and its presence in the memory of the Jewish people. The second is a six-part Hebrew setting of Psalm 130, "Out of the Depths." The third, and his last, though uncompleted, composition, is a setting of one of a series of meditations he had begun to write in 1950 and had originally called *Modern Psalms,* the title under which they were posthumously published against Schoenberg's wishes. It is to these words that the very last notes of music he wrote before his death were set:

O thou my lord, all people
praise thee and assure thee
of their faithfulness.
But what can it mean to thee
whether or not I do the same?
Who am I that I should believe
my prayer to be of necessity?
And yet I pray to thee, as
everyone living prays, and yet
I request mercy and miracles:
fulfillment.
And yet I pray to thee. . . .

SINCE his death, the triumph of Schoenberg's reputation has become increasingly complete. To the numerous faithful students he taught during his lifetime—Alban Berg and Anton Webern being of course the most prominent—have been added posthumous (though partial) converts, Igor Stravinsky and Aaron Copland. Every tribute which scholarship can pay to genius has been paid; articles, archives, and anniversary observances abound. Almost all of his works have been recorded, the eight-volume set on Columbia Records* being due, it is said, to the support of Stravinsky awakened by Robert Craft. The expanded English edition of his selected writings, *Style and Idea,** has now been published in this country at an outrageous price and in a large format suitable more to public reading on de-

* See note below, p. 74.

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votional occasions than to study by individuals with normal eyesight. But a nagging question remains: what is the place of the music around which all this activity centers?

It is clear that Schoenberg's music no longer scandalizes. The opposition he encountered—and from the time of his earliest major works it was fierce—has been assimilated into the 20th-century history of that kind of resistance to the new which ends up sanctifying what it once hated. Schoenberg's dissonances no longer shock; the texts of his expressionist period are no longer considered depraved. Enough time has passed since the high period of Schoenberg's notoriety to provide us with both the distance and the material for an informed and dispassionate verdict on the present place of his music.

THAT verdict, for now at least, seems unavoidable. It is that Schoenberg's music, though it attracts the highest respect for its interest, craftsmanship, and nobility of purpose, has failed to compel immersion in its beauty. It will immediately be objected that this is a judgment not of the music, but of the audience, and of the performing musicians and critics responsible for providing the audience with enlightened leadership. There is some truth in this objection. Even sympathetic audiences generally know little about Schoenberg's pieces, about the wider area of contemporary music of which they are so central a part, or about the music of the 19th-century tradition out of which Schoenberg felt himself to be writing. Performances of Schoenberg in the concert hall—as well as on records—represent more often than not precisely that kind of dry, uninvolved, only technically adequate effort which is, alas, the hallmark of modern music performance. And critics writing about Schoenberg have frequently seemed more eager to display their learning and their labor than to communicate the power they must see in the music.

Yet it is in the end unfair to blame others for the failure of Schoenberg's music to be perceived as beautiful. The mark of great music is that it conquers all before it, performers, critics, and audience alike. It is, after all, hardly accidental that the word ravishing is so often used to describe the highest beauty.

Reluctant as one is to say so, then, the responsibility must lie in Schoenberg's music itself. In speculating on what may have gone wrong, one is led to observe that throughout his compositional career, Schoenberg's works were associated to a unique extent with ideas from outside the world of music itself. Not only were a large proportion of his pieces settings of texts rather than being purely instrumental; these texts were themselves often of the greatest power and resonance, in contrast to the sentimental literary clichés with which Schubert was so often associated, or they were highly controversial, as against the commonly accepted religious and cultural assumptions of the entire society which occupied Bach.

Weighing heavily upon Schoenberg, whether he was fully conscious of it or not, were the teachings of Moses, Herzl, and Freud. He was, for all his ultimate commitment to Jewishness, badly torn between Judaism and Christianity—one of his *Modern Psalms* is concerned with the failure of the Jews adequately to recognize Jesus. He combined in himself the modern sense of art as unconscious process with the modern compulsion to achieve a rational understanding of that process; the twelve-tone method is both an attempt to codify the workings of his imagination and an attempt, perhaps reminiscent of Mendeleev's Periodic Table of the Elements, to predict, through the manipulation of symbols, an as yet undiscovered (musical) reality.

The cumulative effect of this constant involvement with ideas may have been to place upon the music a weight it could not carry, to inhibit Schoenberg in his writing and the audience in its hearing. To the influence of ideas upon music we owe some of the greatest masterpieces of the 19th century, including many of the most stirring works of Beethoven and all the later works of Wagner. But in the 20th century the consequences, not just for Schoenberg, have been less happy. Music has become the handmaiden of politics, as in the Soviet case; or it has become the handmaiden of science and mathematics, as in the case of electronic music; or it has become the handmaiden of the theater, as with the overwhelming majority of contemporary operas. Music has made a Faustian bargain, in which autonomy has been given up in return for inspiration coming from outside the realm of music itself.

BUT if, in Schoenberg's case, the role of their inspiring ideas has been to diminish the musical works, at the same time these very ideas may well guarantee Schoenberg's music its future place. It is not only that the pieces themselves, in their richness of musical material, in the complexity of their construction, in their high seriousness, will always attract the attention of the most gifted musicians; as long as the ideas with which Schoenberg was so deeply involved remain central in our sensibilities, the music which clothes those ideas will remain alive. And perhaps some day—predictions in this area are not worth making—his music will come fully into its own. He always thought it would. He did, after all, identify strongly with Moses.

NOTE

The works of Schoenberg are currently available on records as follows:

Gurrelieder
- Boulez, Columbia M2 33303
- Ferencsik, His Master's Voice SLS 884
- Kubelik, Deutsche Grammophon 2726046

Moses and Aaron
- Boulez, Columbia M2 33594
- Gielen, Philips 6700084

Piano Concerto
- Brendel, Deutsche Grammophon 2530257
- Gould, Columbia MS 7039

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String Quartets
Juilliard Quartet (#2-3), Columbia CSP CML 4736 (mono)
Juilliard Quartet (#4), Columbia CSP CML 4737 (mono)
Kohon Quartet (#1-4), Vox SVBX 590
LaSalle Quartet (#1-4), Deutsche Grammophon 2720029

Schoenberg's remaining works, with a few exceptions, have been available in Columbia's eight-volume set, which dates from the 1960's:

Volume I	M2S 679
Volume II	M2S 694
Volume III	M2S 709
Volume IV	M2S 736
Volume V	M2S 752
Volume VI	M2S 762
Volume VII	M2S 767
Volume VIII	M2S 780

In addition, the following recording, representing as it does a performance conducted by the composer himself, is of the greatest historical interest:
Pierrot Lunaire, Odyssey Y 33791

The basic written material on Schoenberg includes the following:
Reich, Willi. *Schoenberg: A Critical Biography* (Praeger, 1971).
Schoenberg, Arnold. *Letters* (St. Martin's, 1965).
Schoenberg, Arnold. *Style and Idea: Selected Writings* (St. Martin's, 1975).

Movies

Hitchcock in Retrospect

William S. Pechter

I'M USUALLY skeptical about the authenticity of remarks some critics have a knack for overhearing in an audience (remarks which tend conveniently to confirm and capsulize the critic's own view), but then the comment I actually overheard from the audience at the conclusion of *Obsession* left me, at first, feeling less confirmed than bewildered. "Did you see *Murder on the Orient Express*?" the man behind me asked his companion as the lights went up. "This was something like that."

Now *Obsession*, as both its admirers and the film itself have been anything but shy in urging on us, is a movie made, to a perhaps unprecedented degree, "in homage" to the work of another film-maker—Alfred Hitchcock—and to one of his works—*Vertigo*—in particular. Indeed, *Obsession*'s act of homage borders on outright imitation. In both films, the protagonist harbors guilty feelings of responsibility for having been unable to prevent the death of a woman he loved, and, in both, he gets an opportunity to relive the trauma of his past, only to repeat it. And the resemblances between the two films extend from basics to details. *Vertigo* has its misty view of a graveyard, its dwelt-on portrait of the heroine's deceased predecessor, its vertiginous shot of a stairwell; so, too, does *Obsession*. And if *Vertigo*'s camera executes a 360-degree pan around a couple during a climactic embrace, *Obsession*'s will go it one (or two, or three) better. In place of the romantic San Francisco setting of *Vertigo* (which used the city's locales perhaps more imaginatively than any other film before or since), *Obsession* offers us both New Orleans and Florence, though for all it manages to extract from either, it might as well have been shot in Newark. Then everything is bathed in a non-stop reprise of the score for *Vertigo* that the late Bernard Herrmann, who composed the music for the earlier film, was somehow seduced into providing for this one. (Herrmann's reputation would have been better served had his last-written score—for *Taxi Driver*—also been his last released.) And this is barely to scratch the surface of the numerous parallels, big and small, between *Obsession* and its "inspiration." But *Murder on the Orient Express*—that star-laden, period fluff with Hercule Poirot and his little gray cells solving puzzles devised by Agatha Christie? What on earth was there in *Obsession* to remind someone of that?

And then it dawned on me that, while *Obsession* was sending film buffs off to ponder its stylistic and thematic echoes of *Vertigo*, my presumably average man, oblivious to such esoterica, had, in his crude literal-mindedness, perceived a resemblance between two films just because of something so "trivial" as

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the similar premises of their plots: in both, a child is kidnaped, and then, many years later, that kidnaping triggers a violent aftermath. And, indeed, there is a kind of insight in this perception, not unlike the raw wisdom of the famous salesman who walked out of *Death of a Salesman* commiserating with Willy Loman on the drawbacks of the New England territory. For *Obsession* really is about as much like *Murder on the Orient Express* as it is like *Vertigo*, or any other film by Hitchcock. And yet, in a roundabout way, an act of homage to Hitchcock *has* been performed by *Obsession*'s director, Brian De Palma, and its writer, Paul Schrader, in much the same way as Peter Bogdanovich's *What's Up, Doc?* ultimately was a tribute, of sorts, to Hawks's *Bringing Up Baby*. What Schrader and De Palma have proved is that people, even bright and talented people, can sedulously endeavor to construct a Hitchcock movie by the numbers and still come up with a result missing everything of the original: a result lacking everything, body and soul, that one thinks of as constituting that distinctive entity, a Hitchcock movie.

THE question of what does or doesn't constitute a Hitchcock movie was raised a short while ago by another movie—this time a movie by Hitchcock. If I say *Family Plot* seems to me a wan shadow of a Hitchcock film, I don't want to belabor here the various shortcomings of a film I probably went to with more good will, with a greater degree of hope and expectation, than I brought to any other new movie I saw this year. Hitchcock has said in interviews (though one needn't believe it) that he conceives of and plans his films so thoroughly that, for him, the actual shooting is only a necessary but unexciting epilogue to the already performed, true creative act. To this version of a conceptual art, *Family Plot* adds the wrinkle of a film by one of the medium's technical wizards, the basic craftsmanship of which (from the appallingly clumsy exposition to the shoddy process shots) is so slovenly that, to defend the work, one would have to argue on conceptual grounds, that what's done poorly could have been done well if only its director had wanted to.

Will *Family Plot* improve with age, and look beter once we're more able to see it for what it may be rather than in the light of perhaps erroneous expectations? Roger Greenspun has contended that Hitchcock's films have often had such a history of gradual acceptance: tending to be hit over the head with some model of the ideal Hitchcock film when they first appeared, and only later being appreciated for their actual achievements; and though there's some truth to this, there are times when it seems to me no less true, as I believe Michael Wood has suggested, that the ideal Hitchcock film may be a creation which exists only in our heads, and which no actual Hitchcock film has ever lived up to. It is true, for instance, that a work such as *The Wrong Man*, which seemed to me essentially a failure in its own time, remains a film I can continue to watch with interest almost endlessly. And yet, despite its local fascinations (I never cease, for instance, to be chilled by the inexplicable eeriness of the sequence of dissolves to an ever emptier nightclub under *The Wrong Man*'s credits), and my having got past my initial disappointment in not finding it whatever I'd hoped or expected it to be, it seems to me no less a failure now than it did then. On the other hand, I recently turned off a showing on television (hardly, of course, the best way to see it) of *The Birds*, which I've defended as one of Hitchcock's strongest films, when it started to seem to me *less* good than I'd remembered it. Greenspun cites *North by Northwest* as one Hitchcock film which looms larger now than it did in its own time; and, as it happens, *North by Northwest* is the film that, when writing on Hitchcock for the first time, I began by arguing against, as a way of arguing for the supremacy of the Hitchcock of (the far less well received) *Vertigo*. And yet *Vertigo is* a film which, on repeated viewing, I came to see in a different light, and which, flaws and all, was probably the pivotal film in my own attempt to grasp just what it is that gives Hitchcock's work, at its best, its unique excitement.

If, for me, that excitement is utterly lacking in *Family Plot* (which, my expectations disposed of, I saw again), it must be said that already, after the first wave of disappointed reaction in the popular press, the Hitchcock-as-Homer brigade has mobilized to sing the film's praises: the main line seems to be that the film is the surprisingly sunny creation of a seventy-seven-year-old master's autumnal wisdom. And sunny one might well call it, with its lack of (on-screen) violence, and the charmed life it grants to its principal couple, a pair of blessed innocents (broadly overplayed for farce by Bruce Dern and Barbara Harris) who are allowed magically to escape the murderous designs a subsidiary couple has on them. But to admit this is only to realize how little "sunniness" has to do with what one thinks of as the distinctive character of a Hitchcock film.

PERHAPS a more fruitful defense of the film (and of Hitchcock's films generally), and one which shows signs of overtaking the Catholicism-and-transfer-of-guilt wing in the writing-on-Hitchcock industry is the psychoanalytic—specifically, the Oedipal—one. (Straws in the wind: a 115-page Oedipal reading of *North by Northwest*, complete with maps, graphs, and charts, recently published by a French critic and enthusiastically hailed in a Hitchcock issue of an English-language film magazine.) Family plot, to be sure (at the least, one of Hitchcock's best titles); and, of course, it is hard to avoid noticing that, however one may define the nature of Hitchcock's films in comparison with other suspense thrillers, the former are certainly supplied to an unusual degree with familial relationships, and, in particular, with their protagonists' mothers. Is it mere coincidence that the two most richly imagined and memorable characters in Hitchcock's work (a body of work, one might add, not rich in richly imagined characters) are parricides, failed and successful: Bruno (Robert Walker) in *Strangers on a Train* and Norman (An-

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thony Perkins) in *Psycho*? And yet, in both cases, the classically Oedipal import is skirted by displacements: the mother of the would-be parricide in *Strangers on a Train* is surely the most silly and sexless of any in Hitchcock's films (she's played by Marion Lorne of *Mr. Peepers* fame), while it's his (widowed) mother (and her lover) whom Norman has murdered in *Psycho*. Perhaps the strongest suggestion of an Oedipal situation in all of Hitchcock is that of the young man and his mother (there is no father) in *The Birds*, and here the mother (as played as Jessica Tandy) is given a strong sexual presence; but, even here, Hitchcock deliberately (and, I think, wisely) keeps the nature of this peculiar attachment vague.

Does a mother-son romance lurk beneath the surface of *North by Northwest*? Such a case can no doubt be made, but it seems to me that the essence of what goes on between this mother and this son is that he can't get her to take seriously the danger he's in. Evil persons are trying to kill me, he insists, but her response, in effect, is only to tease him for acting like a child who's afraid of the dark. Yet, the "childish" perception of ubiquitous danger is right in *North by Northwest*, as it always is in Hitchcock's films: films whose most vivid images are those of their protagonists reduced almost to impotence (think of the cornfield and crop duster in *North by Northwest*) before some threat to their existence.

Despite their Oedipal elements, the ambience of Hitchcock's films seems to me rather pre-Oedipal,* with the mothers mainly sexless chums, and the fathers either dimly seen or (more often) absent. Of

* And to say pre-Oedipal is to say pre-sexual, which is perhaps why, despite all the titillating talk of sex in Hitchcock's films, their actual erotic temperature is so low. Again, to be sure, there are exceptions: the star chemistry in *Notorious* and the opening of *Psycho* are perhaps most notable among them; but, in the main, the level of coolness is set and maintained by their ice-maiden heroines—Grace Kelly, Tippi Hedren, Julie Andrews, etc.—the golden-haired princess of children's stories onto whom Hitchcock has unconvincingly projected the dirty adult secret that such persons "do it."

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course, his films do abound in Oedipal elements; given a critical disposition to track such things down, what films, or works of art generally, do not, since, like "phallic symbols," such stuff is everywhere? Hitchcock has several times spoken of the traumatic effect on him of his having been, as a child, locked in a prison cell (as a cautionary jest) by a policeman, and, while one needn't make too much of this incident as the single key to Hitchcock's work, certainly the two most insistently recurring elements of that work are already prefigured in it: the precariousness of the constantly menaced foundations which underlie our day-to-day existence, and the inability of innocence to protect one when falsely accused. To say that such things are preeminently the stuff of which one's earliest terrors are formed is not to belittle Hitchcock's work, which seems to me to be in touch with a child's perception of the world—and with certain childhood dream states—in a way I think ought to be valued highly. There can be something diminishingly childish occasionally mixed with this: one sees it in Hitchcock's little boy's pleasure in his ability to shock and scandalize. But, at its best, a Hitchcock film is an intricate and ingenious formal construct at whose heart lie certain nightmare images: images which render, with a child's special clarity and acuity, a sense of the imperiled ego, fragile and all but defenseless in an indifferent universe, and facing the prospect of its extinction.

Is this version of Hitchcock's films sufficient—does it offer an account of their unity imposing enough to vie with that of guilt transference and the Oedipus complex? For some others, undoubtedly not, but its weight is sufficient for me. For me, it's enough that, at their best, Hitchcock's films strike terror: terror in their reminder of how precipitously we can be snatched from the routines of our cozy existences, and, however innocent, find ourselves in peril; they are reminders of just how thin is the membrane of adulthood which separates us from a fearful realization of our vulnerability. To say that such apprehensions of terror provide the fixed points about which the web of Hitchcock's work is spun isn't to accuse that work of being static, or to deny that his films have undergone some real evolution: a *Vertigo is* significantly different from *The 39 Steps.* For one thing, there's a real complication in the later films' sense of their protagonists' innocence: innocent of what they're accused of, they still feel themselves somehow guilty; the protagonist of *The Wrong Man,* for example, though innocent of the crime with which he's charged, is nevertheless guilt-ridden for having failed to be a good provider, much as his wife is finally unbalanced by her guilt in believing she's failed him. And then there's the pervasive, unnameable "guilt" of the characters in *The Birds.* Such complications do, I think, make the later films more interesting, if not necessarily better. Yet I'm not at all sure that, given the highly charged sense of a working through of the material of certain private obsessions which Hitchcock's films convey, one renders the best account of them by attempting to break their codes into universal meaning: it may be enough to say, for instance, that, for Hitchcock, there's simply something vaguely sinister about young women who wear glasses, and that his films effectively communicate this (*Strangers on a Train, Vertigo,* etc.), rather than to try to relate this to some scheme of signification. And, conversely, given a Hitchcock film as full of material ripe for explication as *Family Plot,* it may be wiser to leave such stuff as one finds it, lying there inertly.

Yet there's no doubt that *Family Plot* is an exegete's dream of a Hitchcock movie. Rather as with John Ford in *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance,* Hitchcock has provided in *Family Plot* a kind of lecture-demonstration on the subject of what his films consist of. And just as Ford has added the challenge of bringing this off without resort to his celebrated poetic landscapes, so, too, has Hitchcock confidently run the risk of giving us a Hitchcock film without violence—even (though perhaps less intentionally) without suspense. But *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance,* whatever its failings as a work of art, offered the real excitement of seeing an artist, often assumed to work on an almost folk-art level of unself-consciousness, reveal that he understood fully what his greatest work encompassed; that so wily a strategist as Hitchcock knows what he's up to is something we never really doubted. To see Ford explicitly articulating the themes that his great work so seamlessly embodies is to learn something about him well worth knowing; to see Hitchcock (a director famous for his conscious manipulation of his audience) demonstrate that he knows what he's doing is to learn nothing. What's worse, the magic, when it's laid out before us, doesn't work; everything that goes into the making of a Hitchcock film is there, but, almost to the degree of an *Obsession,* it just lies there: slack, tensionless, stillborn. Everything, that is, but the terror; in its place, the film's playful sunniness. Perhaps it's true that what one sees in *Family Plot* is the reflection of an aged artist's attainment of tranquility: of a serene wisdom in which all those childhood terrors have been finally exorcised, and put behind him. If so, so much the better for Hitchcock. And so much the worse for us.

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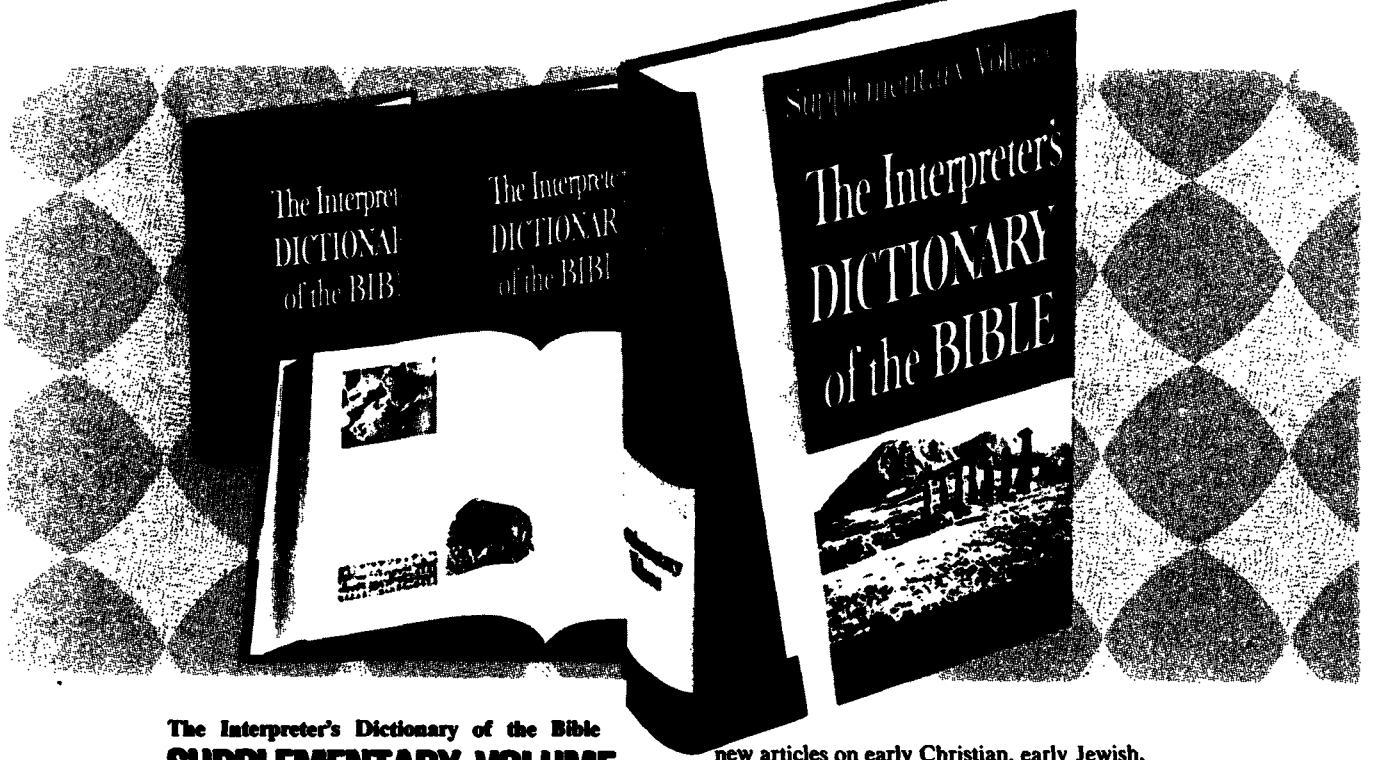

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Books in Review

Unsentimental Journey

TO JERUSALEM AND BACK: A PERSONAL ACCOUNT. By SAUL BELLOW. *Viking. 182 pp. $8.95.*

Reviewed by EDWARD GROSSMAN

AFTER Saigon disappeared as a by-line from American papers, Jerusalem became the place where most front-page foreign news is filed, with Beirut second. Aside from the reporters living in Israel and telexing stories daily, there are the stars of journalism—talented ex-reporters who no longer need to slip their opinions in between the lines—who visit for a week or two, maybe a month, and write up their experience. Many choose the diary form, since that seems to be the easiest, most natural way of listing a whirlwind series of encounters, interviews, sights, ideas, responses. The Israeli diary has become a genre. Though most of the writing produced so far hasn't been able to convey more than surface impressions (often marked by hilarious mistakes due to ignorance or simple-mindedly good intentions), it is clear that these are meant to be thoughtful pieces, supplying what is missing in regular news and TV "stories." The implicit claim is that the reader might profit something from following the tourist-writer through Israel, that overwritten country.

In his short new book in diary form, Saul Bellow demonstrates the possibility of making good on such a promise. Admittedly, Bellow is not a journalist, if journalism is defined as writing that is published in newspapers and magazines, or any writing that will be less interesting tomorrow than it is today. Bellow has not often published anything other than novels and stories; but he has occasionally written short pieces of reporting and reflection combined—such as a magazine essay fifteen years ago on Khrushchev, which still stands up tolerably today. *To Jerusalem and Back,* while recognizably Bellow's work, is something of a departure. It handles the stuff of the daily headlines without the tools of metaphor, and it is obviously meant, among other things, to affect, directly and quickly, what is called public opinion. From one aspect, *To Jerusalem and Back* is in the tradition of political pamphlets, which have their ground in the moment they are written, and which act to educate and rally sentiment, the sooner the better. From another angle, this book should be read as a continuation of Bellow's life-long meditation on the themes of good-heartedness and private longing in an age of commercial, cultural, and political racketeering.

"Probably the trade I have followed for so many years has made me naive." Is it disingenuous for Bellow to note this? For years he has been an open-eyed specialist in American urban paranoia and the slugging rise of ex-slum boys. But confronted by the Israelis, their past and present and their prospects, Bellow thinks that he has been spared harsh, truthful blows in comparison, thanks to being a writer, an academic, and, especially, an American. Bellow—who once had his fictional creature Henderson declare, "The truth comes in blows"—believes that Americans continue to be sheltered from some of the deadlier rackets operating on a mass scale in the world. If this is temporarily comfortable for his countrymen, it is downright dangerous for those dependent on American support and understanding, like the Israelis. So continually in *To Jerusalem and Back* Bellow, worried by this innocence, enacts the role of one of those reality instructors who hold forth in his novels, about whom he evidently has mixed feelings. Here the object of the teaching is at once the reader and Bellow himself. There is no pretense that Bellow is about to pick up something new about human nature at his age, but he can learn how it has revealed itself in arrangements and crimes, and in the particulars of the look and history of a region—the Middle East—with which he was previously not very familiar.

Like his other books, this is bookish and down to earth. Bellow gets much of his Middle Eastern education from an excellent reading list, and quotes from it generously for the reader's benefit. Elie Kedourie, Malcolm Kerr, Bernard Lewis, Theodore Draper, Walter Laqueur, Yehoshafat Harkabi—these writers are usually unencumbered by the jargon and mythology propagated by area experts and transformed into hopeful media clichés. With all their different emphases and styles, Kedourie and the others studied by Bellow agree that Zionism was not the region's Original Sin; that non-Muslim minorities in the Middle East have a precarious hold on their communal independence and civil rights, if not their very lives; that Arab socialism is more rhetoric than substance; that the Palestinian refugee question has always been incidental to the Muslim Arabs' refusal to have a Jewish state in their midst; and that Israeli territorial concessions alone will never cause peace to break out. Such views, based more or less explicitly on evidence of recurring blood lust exploitable but not controllable by political gangsters, of which the Lebanese slaughter is the latest expression, are unpopular for obvious reasons in America, Europe, and also Israel. They sort badly with neo-Marxist and corporate think-tank projections of what should happen in the so-called Third World. To accept them, even seriously to consider them, is presumed by some to be equivalent to closing off the mind or giving in to despair. Although Bellow doesn't swallow his reading list uncritically, *To Jerusalem and Back* is certainly not an optimistic book; however, it is not despairing, either. So far as Bellow undermines the convention-

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al wisdom for himself and for a far larger audience than his authorities can command, his book has a liberating effect.

Bellow could have done his homework in Chicago but he did most of it in Jerusalem, between listening to people talk and walking around the city for three months. There is a constant tension and reverberation between his readings and his observations:

> Here in Jerusalem, when you shut your apartment door behind you you fall into a gale of conversation—exposition, argument, harangue, analysis, theory, expostulation, threat, and prophecy. From diplomats you hear cagey explanations; from responsible persons, cautious and grudging statements rephrasing and amending your own questions; from parents and children, deadly divisions; from friends who let themselves go, passionate speeches, raging denunciations of Western Europe, of Russia, of America. I listen carefully, closely, more closely than I've ever listened in my life, utterly attentive, but I often feel that I have been dropped into a shoreless sea.

Attempting to achieve "clarity," Bellow notices first that the Israelis are less confident than when he visited last, before the Yom Kippur War, and that the roll of Israel's failings and offenses that is publicized abroad is also given wide currency inside Israel:

> The New Left sees it as a reactionary little place. Its detractors tell you how it abuses its Arab population and, to a lesser extent, Jewish immigrants from North Africa and the Orient. It is occasionally denounced by some Israelis as corrupt, "Levantine," theocratic. Gossip traces the worst of the Israeli financial swindles to the most observant of Orthodox Jews. I am often told that the old Ashkenazi leaders were unimaginative, that the new Rabin group lacks stature, that Ben-Gurion was a terrible old guy but a true leader, that the younger generation is hostile to North African and Asian Jews. The North African and Oriental immigrants are blamed for bringing a baksheesh mentality to Israel; the intellectuals are blamed for letting the quality of life (a deplorable phrase) deteriorate.

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The extremely typical epitome of this self-criticism comes in the words of an Israeli novelist who informs Bellow that "Israel has sinned too much . . . lost its moral capital and has nothing to fight with." That was before the Entebbe mission, yet Bellow understood that this writer was wrong, that his words were not to be taken literally. Bellow does not downplay Israel's woes and shortcomings, he has an inkling of the mediocrity and cant here and there, high and low, but he is good enough —and this is unusual these days—to get behind the words and see that the incessant weighing of the national soul on the scales of moral beauty is actually proof that the Israelis are faithfully carrying out their peculiar and unhappy assignment. American and European radicals, Bellow says with bitterness, "appear to believe that the Jews, with their precious and refining record of suffering, have a unique obligation to hold up moral burdens everyone else has dumped." Like it or not, the Israelis, being Jews after all, seem to be doing their duty, acting perforce not so much in their own interest as in the interest of those for whom they are surrogates.

Bellow manages to state this perception without giving the impression of smugness, complacency, or satisfaction; that is because, with rare breaks, the dominant mood of *To Jerusalem and Back* is one of uneasiness, an emotion that the not-so-private diarist urgently wishes to communicate to his readers. His fear is that Americans and other people in the West will focus on Israel's "multitude of faults" and acquiesce in the imposition of still-born solutions on the Middle East, in order to obscure what is really at stake. For if Western radicals, consciously or unconsciously, expect Israel to be their better half, too many others prefer to blink the whole issue, which for Bellow comes down to nothing less than the survival of virtue: "The 'civilized world,' or the 20th-century ruins of that world to which so many Jews gave their admiration and devotion between, say, 1789 and 1933 . . . has grown sick of the ideals Israel asks it to respect." Israel is, indeed, a terrible bother to the "humanistic civilized moral imagination," which Bellow says is sunk in "lethargy and sleep."

However, his own imagination is humanistic, civilized, moral. Calling it "inadequate," he can propose nothing better, not even cynicism, though the temptations of cynicism have never been stronger, and though, from time to time, Bellow gives in to them, only to draw back before the barrenness and false comfort. Here Bellow is incorrigible. Disappointed, educated, he remains a humanist, a liberal. If he acts the reality instructor, demanding of readers that they forswear illusion, it is not so he can give them the low-down, and rub their noses in that other lie, which holds that humans today are universally mean and worthless. Nor does Bellow, in contrast with the colorful gallery of steam-bath philosophers who inhabit his novels, appear to relish the task he has taken on. To inform himself and think about the "butcher problems"—the Sixth Fleet, the terrorist bomb that explodes in a restaurant in Jaffa Road—is unpleasant. He would rather be enjoying literature, or sitting in one of Jerusalem's quiet places, being moved mystically:

> I enter a flagstoned court in the Greek quarter and see that it is covered by a grapevine. . . . Light shimmers through the leaf cover. I want to go no farther that day. . . . I am tempted to sit down and stay put for an aeon in the consummate mildness. . . . The origin of this desire is obvious—it comes from the contrast between politics and peace. The slightest return of beauty makes you aware how deep your social wounds are, how painful it is to think continually of nothing but aggression and defense, superpowers, diplomacy, war.

What is real, the "consummate mildness" of personal, poetic experience, or the "butcher problems"? Which one prevails? Bellow's debate with himself on this throughout *To Jerusalem and Back*, continuing when he is home again in Chicago, provides the book with a dimension beyond polemic. Bellow is not blind to the fact that these Israelis—to whom he feels so close, as an American and as a Jew—have lost something in their inescapable

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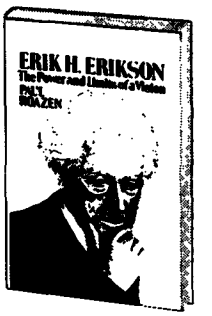

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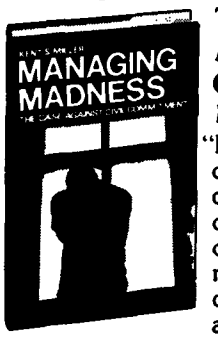

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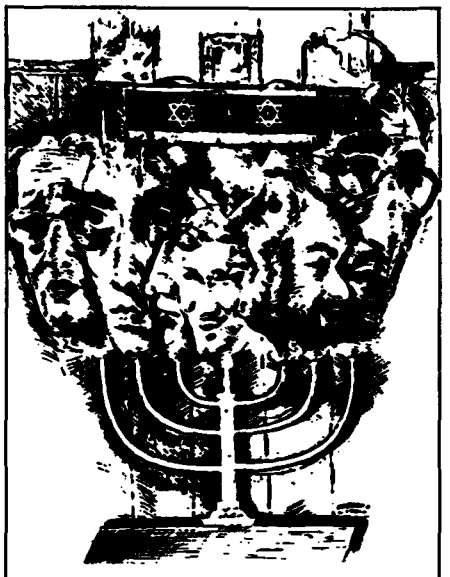

"Gossip locates the self in society

...gossip offers the individuals in the group the chance to find out whom they are among, what is thought there, what the 'we-group' believes, and the ways in which its members act."

Gossip is a vital part of the behavior of the Orthodox congregation of "Kehillat Kodesh" which Samuel C. Heilman describes in **SYNAGOGUE LIFE**. Using terms of the drama as his framework, Heilman sets the scene, defines the setting and cast of characters, and presents the action. As he notes, "through words more than any other behavior, the people of Kehillat Kodesh reveal themselves."

As Heilman makes clear, a small Orthodox congregation in the midst of an inhospitable environment has a fragile existence; gossip offers an outlet for aggression with a minimum of threat to the stability of the group. In addition, he points out, everyday shul Jews are unwilling to talk openly about the anxieties and theological conflicts that beset them in the modern world. The small talk of gossip—and its affiliate, joking—is infinitely safer and more manageable.

It is Heilman's intent to show that the study of this one society can shed light on all society. He did not research or write the book as a mere academic observer but as a member of the congregation he describes, a participant in the gossip, and the target of jokes about "Sam's book." This excellent study of symbolic interaction has, therefore, the added dimension of human warmth.

SYNAGOGUE LIFE $12.95

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preoccupation with war, become split or hypertrophied. Their beleaguered land is "both a garrison state and a cultivated society, both Spartan and Athenian." And, for all his concern about the dreaminess of Americans, he knows we too "have mechanisms operating within, answering, to more remote stimuli, phantoms of crisis that set off endless circuits of anxious calculation." He honors, maybe envies, those writers who refused "to submit to what societies and governments consider to be important" (Stendhal, E.E. Cummings, Mandelstam, Sinyavsky), and wonders, more than half-convinced, whether "to remain a poet . . . is also to reach the heart of politics." Nevertheless, that is not the route he has taken, and by reason of temperament and circumstances he probably had no choice. *To Jerusalem and Back* is in "the public realm":

> What drives the soul into the public realm is, first, the reality of the threat to civilization and to our own existence; second, our duty to struggle and resist (as we conceive this); third, the influence of public discussion in the press, on television, in books, in lecture halls, or at dinner tables, in offices; and fourth, perhaps, is our own deep desire to send the soul into society.

This last motive, for fame, should not be misunderstood. Actually, it took courage for Bellow to publish this book. Lately it may seem that everybody is writing first-hand about Israel; in fact, these are mostly journalists and glorified journalists. The writers who have reputations as masters of American culture, which they made with novels addressed to the entire literate public, yet who are identifiable in one way or another as Jews, have tended to shun the subject of Israel and may never have set foot there. Some are known for overt political engagements, going back to the Vietnam era or before, in the course of which they have done everything from signing petitions to abandoning fiction in favor of books on burning current issues. To be specific, these were some pages of caricature devoted to Israel in *Portnoy's Complaint*. The silence of Norman Mailer is more typical, however. It would be nice to give the benefit of the doubt, to credit such writers with an unwillingness to add to the pile of superficialities and pieties already written concerning Israel—not unintelligent, they must realize how little they know when it comes to this subject. That is possible. But one's stronger suspicion is that to delve into the Jewish state and its relations with America would mean raising in public questions of the writer's identity that are frightening and would best be left alone; rather than go into this, the tacit excuse for silence is that Israel is of interest and importance only to Jews, and to write about it, let alone rally support, would betray parochialism. Against this background, Bellow's achievement is more impressive still.

Desegregation & the Courts

DISASTER BY DECREE: THE SUPREME COURT DECISIONS ON RACE AND THE SCHOOLS. By LINO GRAGLIA. *Cornell University Press. 352 pp. $11.50.*

Reviewed by ELLIOTT ABRAMS

THE case against the forced busing of schoolchildren is by now a familiar one, and was most persuasively set forth in Nathan Glazer's March 1972 COMMENTARY article, "Is Busing Necessary?" Lino Graglia has little to add to the political or sociological arguments, and for these he rightly relies on Glazer and such other critics of busing as David Armor and the newly-converted James Coleman. Graglia's contribution is to make a lawyer's case against the school decisions, for they must stand or fall first as constitutional law, and only secondly as social policy. A professor of constitutional law at the University of Texas Law School, Graglia knows his craft, and using its standards he attempts to reduce the school cases to what he believes they were: a jumble of prejudices, presumptions, and plain error.

It has been said by some that a

ELLIOTT ABRAMS, *whose reviews and essays appear regularly in* COMMENTARY *and other periodicals, is special counsel to Senator Henry M. Jackson.*

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long line of fine decisions concerning desegregation suddenly "went wrong" when busing was mandated by the courts as a remedy. Graglia does not share this view. Rather, it is his contention that the 1954 *Brown* v. *Board of Education* opinion itself made the grave errors which contained the seeds of today's difficulties. To begin with, he joins those who find gratuitous the Supreme Court's use of sociological and psychological evidence in *Brown*. Graglia believes that the Court should have straightforwardly overruled the "separate but equal" case, *Plessy* v. *Ferguson*, and should have ruled that the Constitution simply forbids racial discrimination by the federal or state governments against citizens. This is, of course, what the Court meant—the simple principle that racial discrimination by the government is impermissible—but in basing its decision on sociological and psychological evidence which was highly controversial and in any event beyond the Court's competence to assess, it opened itself to the charge of disingenuousness and raised the specter of a judiciary which rules by social theory rather than by law.

Graglia also criticizes the Court for the delay—"in effect, a ten-year grace period"—which it permitted in meeting the demands of the *Brown* decision. His point is not merely that this delay made the Court seem hesitant and thus encouraged resistance, but that the gradualness of compliance with *Brown* fostered an overseer role for the courts that in effect turned them into school boards. Since compliance was to be "managed" rather than demanded at once, all sorts of detailed desegregation plans were required, and it fell to the courts to provide them.

Though Graglia does not, one can well sympathize with the plight of the courts at that time: many a defendant school board in the 50's claimed to have eliminated its dual school system, as required, yet continued to maintain schools which were all-white or all-black. Defendants attributed this to the free choice of parents, or to residential patterns, or to many other extrinsic factors not involving official actions; plaintiffs blamed the officials, often with obvious justification, for continuing segregation under more sophisticated guises. It was in the face of this situation that the courts came to judge the success of desegregation by asking how much *actual* integration there was, and—by fallaciously assuming that the elimination of segregation would always result in a balanced pattern of integration—to demand what Graglia calls "compulsory integration," race balancing according to arithmetic formulas. In so doing, however, the courts also abandoned the principle which had made *Brown* a great decision. As Graglia states:

> Compulsory integration not only requires the abandonment or major qualification of the principle that racial discrimination by government is prohibited, but substitutes no meaningful alternative principle. The result is that the requirement is not only difficult to accept but difficult to understand. . . . Greater racial mixing in each school or in some proportion of the schools in the system was apparently the objective, but no indication was given of the degree of mixing that would suffice or of the obstacles that would have to be overcome in order to achieve it.

Graglia is most persuasive when he is closely following the pattern of court decisions since *Brown*, searching for what Herbert Wechsler of Columbia called "neutral principles" of constitutional law. Graglia finds none whatsoever, seeing instead frequent contradictions in the use of evidence and in patterns of analysis. He rightly complains of the "almost totally unrestricted freedom of choice district judges possess in 'desegregation' litigation," and does not shrink from calling this "an essentially lawless system of government." Though his language is melodramatic and his analysis overdrawn, his point is well taken. Today district judges, no longer bound by the principle of non-discrimination, are free to impose "desegregation plans" which will achieve the degree of racial balance they themselves believe appropriate. The objective legal standards

Equality can be shared but it cannot be divided.

It is appropriate in this Bicentennial year that a prominent black historian should raise his voice amid the clamor of self-congratulation. In **RACIAL EQUALITY IN AMERICA**, John Hope Franklin reminds us how, since Jefferson did not include blacks among those "created equal," the resulting legacy of inequality was passed from generation to generation.

Franklin recounts the sorry history of how—until very recently—those in power in this country "have succeeded in achieving the democratically incongruous feat of designating who should be equal and who should not be." He traces, century by century, the official attitudes that perpetuated the myth of black inferiority, pointing out that, even in FDR's administration, neither President nor Congress would support racial equality in relief and employment. Discrimination, Franklin states, was official policy until Truman's time, when the federal government finally began to strive for at least the semblance of racial equality.

"The institution of slavery was profitable," writes Franklin, "but the damage to the national purpose and even to the national character could not be determined by the plantation book-keeper."

RACIAL EQUALITY IN AMERICA
The 1976 Jefferson Lecture in the Humanities, presented by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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by which to judge these plans are few, and city after city simply finds itself, without recourse, subject to the whims of a local judge.

Indeed, if there *is* a "neutral principle" behind the court rulings, perhaps it is suggested by a quotation from Jefferson with which Graglia begins his book and which reads in part, "Our judges are as honest as other men, and not more so. They have, with others, the same passion for party, for power, and the privilege of their corps." The clearest explanation for recent court rulings, in other words, may be that they expand the power of the courts, a result presumably not objectionable to most judges. To rule for the defendant school board in a school case is after all to wash one's hands of the affair; to rule for the plaintiffs is to control large parts of the city's life almost single-handedly and for a period of years. The temptations are enormous, even for men of good will, perhaps most of all for men of good will: who could resist the opportunity to try and set things straight once and for all? Thus a judge creates himself a kind of sociologist-king, except that most judges are not even competent sociologists. And even if they were, Graglia is correct in wondering just how much power should be allotted to life-tenured judges in a system of representative democracy.

IN CALLING for an end to judicial tyranny, Graglia points to the increased responsiveness of our representative political institutions to the rights of America's minorities. "Whatever justification the Court's attempt to do more may once have had is surely much lessened by the substantial increase in the legal protection, and continuing increase in the political influence, of blacks," he writes. Yet his critical view of the role the courts have played in desegregating American society is in the end somewhat one-sided. The decisions he attacks are not only part of a wave of judicial activism which we may criticize, but also of the historical movement to secure equal rights for all Americans, which we must respect. In fact, it is precisely our recognition of the courts' role in that historic movement which makes today's decisions, in areas such as busing and job quotas, seem so destructive—so totally at variance with the principles the decisions claim to advance, and so oddly congruent with the discriminatory practices they claim to prohibit.

Intellectual Portraits

VICO AND HERDER: TWO STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF IDEAS. By ISAIAH BERLIN. *Viking. 216 pp. $12.50.*

Reviewed by JACK BEATTY

THE work and influence of Sir Isaiah Berlin are fundamental to the intellectual life of our time. Anyone wishing to draw distinctions between positive liberty and negative liberty, between the humanities and the sciences, between pluralism and monism will find himself using categories that Berlin either invented or has succeeded in making his own. One can scarcely invoke the names of Machiavelli, Marx, Tolstoy, Turgenev, or John Stuart Mill, or talk about such things as nationalism, romanticism, Zionism, or the Enlightenment, without acknowledging a debt to his thought. We live our intellectual lives in a climate he has helped to shape. Yet it is difficult to describe this eminent Oxford don. Historian seems too limited; philosopher, though closer and possessing the requisite weight, is still not quite apt; perhaps historian and grand expositor of ideas.

Berlin's study of Vico and Herder—consisting of two essays written some time ago and now considerably revised—illustrates why the essay is his natural form, though he has also written several books, including a 1939 biography of Marx and, improbably enough, a book on Winston Churchill. The two essays are dense intellectual portraits, with the emphasis on "intellectual," for Berlin is interested in

JACK BEATTY, *a new contributor, is an admissions counselor at the University of Massachusetts at Boston, and has published reviews and essays in the* Yale Review, *the* Nation, *and elsewhere.*

"Observers of American religion regularly need to map the terrain."

This is what Martin E. Marty, one of the most notable of these observers, does in his new book, A NATION OF BEHAVERS.

"The act of describing the landscape and its landmarks will not save souls or make all sad hearts glad. But it can contribute to a working-out process that will be helpful to both participants and observers," writes Marty.

The most prominent landmark in Marty's new map is "Mainline Religion" which is defined as Protestant-Catholic-Jewish establishment. "Evangelical Fundamentalism," "Pentecostal-Charismatic," "New Religions," "Ethnic Religion," and "Civil Religion" are other clearly visible points.

It is Marty's contention that the inhabitants of these various religious clusters are distinguished not so much by what they believe but by how they behave—that religion today is used as a means of establishing identity and social location in a secular, pluralist society.

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ideas themselves, not in their biographical sources. Thus, about Giambattista Vico (1668-1744) we learn that he was an impecunious Neapolitan scholar who, failing to get a coveted academic post, put the whole of his thwarted ambition into the writing of his *La Scienza Nuova* (1725). And about Johann Herder (1744-1803), that passionate advocate of personal wholeness, we learn not much more than that he was a "deeply divided, resentful, bitter, touchy man" for whom ideas functioned as compensatory fantasies, allowing him to possess in imagination what he lacked in an unhappy life spent as preacher to the court of Weimar.

ACCORDING to Berlin, Vico's most revolutionary idea, which amounts to nothing less than the modern way of thinking about history, is that man, because he has made history himself, can understand it in a deeper way than he can ever understand nature, which has been made by God. This idea, which remains subject to dispute even today, burst the epistemological boundaries of Vico's age—the age of the great scientific revolution, of Newton, Boyle, and Descartes. Descartes in particular put his immense prestige behind the proposition that the only knowledge worthy of the name was *a priori* knowledge, such as could be got from the study of mathematics and perhaps physics. The study of history Descartes dismissed as an amusing pastime, coining the famous gibe that the vast labors of the antiquarians in reconstructing the final years of the Roman republic had done no more than recover information that was available to Cicero's servant girl. Vico, who came to intellectual maturity under the Cartesian dispensation, ended by attacking its very foundations.

Vico's idea, Berlin shows, lies at the bottom of the split between the humanities and the sciences, for if Vico is right, there are two ways of knowing: from the outside, the way we know the natural world, and from the inside, the way we know the world of men. The former relies on deductive and empirical modes of thought; the latter on what we call imagination and Vico called *fantasia*, the faculty by which we can "feel ourselves" into lives and cultures different from our own. Because we are men, and not rocks or trees, which are of a different substance and hence opaque to us, we possess within ourselves the key to understanding what other men have made. As the most celebrated passage of *The New Science* puts it: "The world of human society has certainly been made by men; and its principles are to be found within the modifications of our own minds."

Because man makes his own history, he can understand it; if he can understand it, he can also bring it under his control. Though the political tendency of Vico's thought is unmistakably conservative, this unspoken corollary of his basic idea—that man can achieve rational mastery of his history—is

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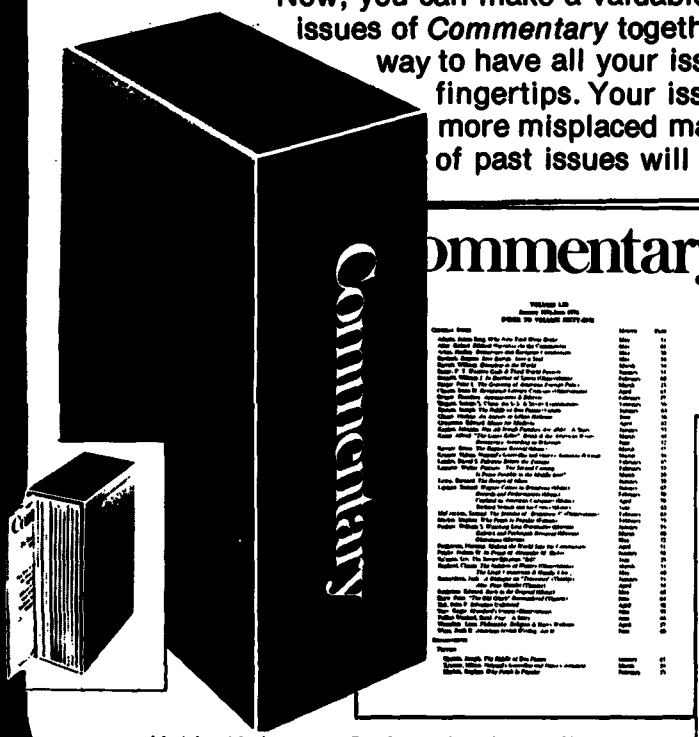

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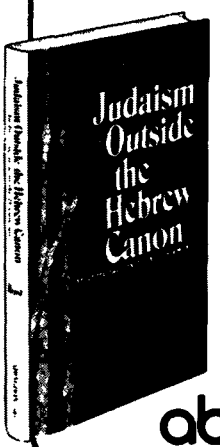

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at the source of the European revolutionary tradition. It is worth remembering that Edmund Wilson's *To the Finland Station*, which ends with a chapter on Lenin, begins with one on Vico.

It was not until the 19th century that Vico even began to come into his own, thanks to Michelet, who was transfixed by his very first encounter with Vico's thought and became his greatest champion. Not so Marx, who mentions Vico in one footnote but was untouched by Vico's influence. Dilthey, Croce, and Collingwood are Vico's direct heirs, as, among contemporaries, is the gnomic Norman O. Brown, but for the most part he remains, as Berlin says, "unreadable and unread."

ALTHOUGH there is an uncanny similarity between their ideas, Vico's influence on Herder is still a matter of scholarly dispute. There is no doubt that Herder had read *The New Science* by 1789, but by then Herder had long since worked through the most original and most "Vichian" of his own ideas. In his essay on Herder, which is half as long as the one on Vico, Berlin limits himself to "three cardinal ideas in the rich welter of Herder's thought," which he designates populism, expressionism, and pluralism.

Born on the Baltic frontier of Germany, Herder is an instance of that recurring phenomenon, the man from the provinces who becomes a passionate advocate of the national ideal—in some measure, according to Berlin, precisely because of his provincial origins. It is only in the outlying regions of a nation, as Berlin wrote in an earlier essay, "that the ideal vision of the people or the nation, as it should be, as one sees it with the eyes of faith, whatever the actual facts, is generated and grows fervent." Herder was a passionate advocate all his life of the belief that men must belong to a group—a belief Berlin calls populism—and one of the first to see the separation from such a group as a deep privation and the source of an unappeasable hunger. ("Nostalgia," he wrote, "is the noblest of all pains.") For Herder, moreover, there is only one "natural," "organic," "authentic" group (the use of these words as moral categories begins with Herder and the romantics) to which modern men can belong, and this is the nation—the term nationalism (*Nationalismus*) is Herder's coinage.

Herder died before the wave of the French revolutionary armies had receded from his country and long before the answering wave of German national feeling swelled to the proportions it reached by the mid-19th century. Still, there are times when he sounds the very type of the insensate German nationalist, as in his exhortations to his countrymen to throw off the yoke of French culture: "Germans, speak German! Spew out the Seine's ugly slime." These moments are few, however; Herder's nationalism—better, his populism—is for the most part not political, for he detested the state and all forms of imperialism and conquest.

Instead of the state, which he called an artificial monster that "robs men of themselves," Herder urged allegiance to national cultures, as expressed in traditions, ceremonies, national customs, and above all language, that which binds men together and expresses the "collective individuality" of the group. To Herder, the modernist view that works of art are to be understood as autonomous creations, beautiful objects that, in E.M. Forster's phrase, "want not to be signed," would have been unintelligible, for a work of art to him is a "voice speaking," a form of communication bearing the signature of a self and of a society. This belief is what Berlin means by expressionism, and he traces its political and literary vicissitudes with a masterly hand.

It is pluralism, however, which is Herder's overriding idea, entailing both the belief that cultures are not commensurable and the doctrine of the plurality of ultimate values. It is a radical idea—subversive, as Berlin says, of the main tradition of Western moral thought.

The note of pluralism is sounded in the first sentence of Herder's masterwork, *Ideas Toward a Universal History*, when he says "The earth is a star among stars." For Herder there is no chosen people

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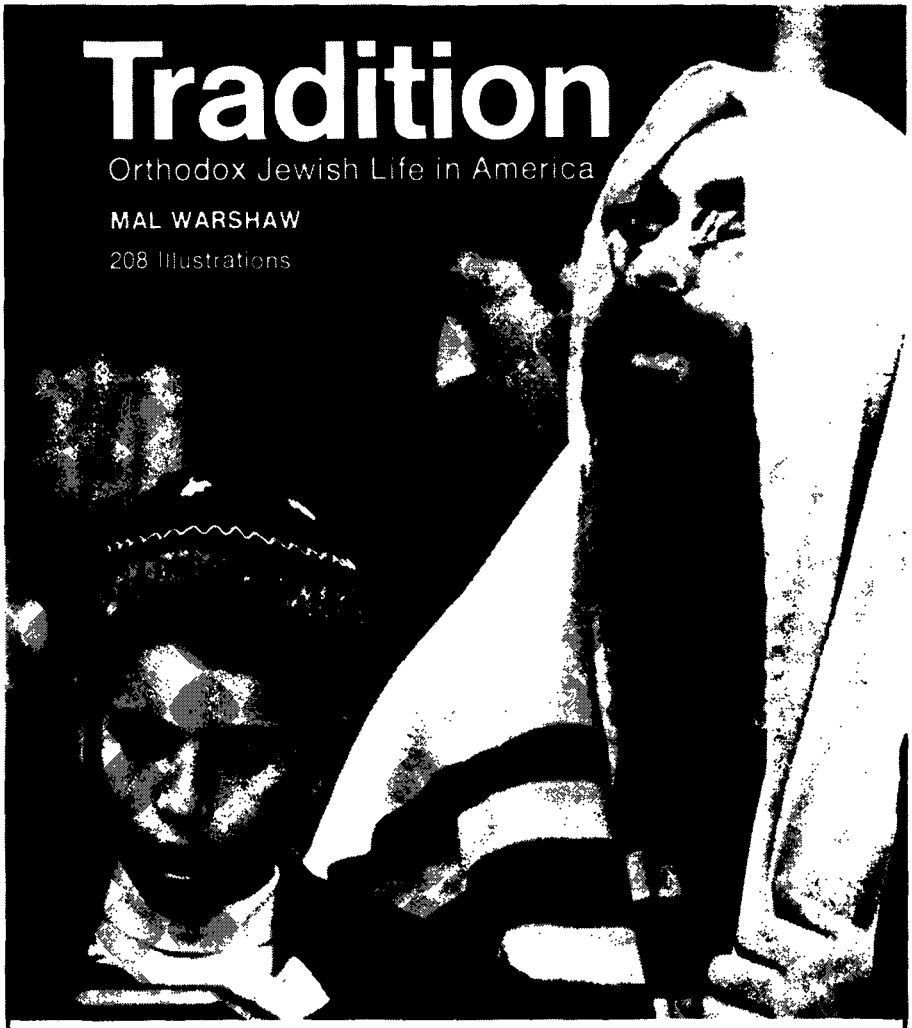

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(*Favoritvolk*), for different cultures cannot be measured against one another. Each has its own virtues and its own "center of gravity." There is no hierarchy of cultures, nor can the culture of one historical epoch be judged in terms of another's. Greece was not a preparation for Rome; the Middle Ages was not a passageway to the Renaissance. It is with Herder, as Raymond Williams points out in his recent *Keywords,* that the use of "cultures" in the plural begins, in contrast to the monolithic and unilinear process conveyed by the term "civilization."

If the radically differing principles and values of, say, the Greeks, the early Hebrews, the Romans, the Middle Ages, and the Quattrocento are all equally "right," it follows that there can be no way of life which is right for all men, everywhere, at all times, and no possibility of harmonizing and reconciling discordant cultural values. This recognition, that opposing values may be equally valid and yet pose irreconcilable conflicts—illustrated in our own time, for example, by the opposing claims of liberty and equality—is surely Herder's most disquieting idea, "the sharpest blow," in Berlin's words, "ever delivered against the classical philosophy of the West, to which the notion of perfection—the possibility, at least in principle, of universal timeless solutions to problems of value—is essential."

"All the good things"—like liberty and equality, justice and freedom—"don't go together," is the way Berlin puts it, summarizing Herder's thought but also expressing his own. For nearly forty years he has been advancing this unsettling idea, tucked away in essays on other thinkers. Men are obligated to choose not between good and evil, but among rival goods. Hegel thought this dilemma the essence of tragedy, and William James may have had in mind the sacrifices entailed in the making of such choices when he wrote that "something drastic and bitter always remains at the bottom of the cup." Berlin, however, emphasizes the positive side of pluralism—if there is no one right way of life, then the ends of life are infinitely varied,

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and there is something inexpressibly valuable in variety itself. He fears the modern pressure toward uniformity and standardization, and wants a system that gives the fullest play to individuality, eccentricity, idiosyncrasy—that lets men become what they have it in them to become. This vision of human possibility is the essence of liberalism, and not the least measure of Isaiah Berlin's distinction is that he has helped keep that vision alive.

Sickness and Health

MEDICAL NEMESIS. By IVAN ILLICH. *Pantheon. 294 pp. $8.95.*

Reviewed by ROGER STARR

As THE public-policy aspects of medicine loom larger day by day in the media, and the awe with which laymen have regarded physicians melts into suspicion, one turns with interest to any new book purporting to examine present-day medical conditions or to offer an alternative to our current health system. Despite its title and its copious use of source materials, not all of which are relevant to the discussion, Ivan Illich's *Medical Nemesis* does not do either. Though it contains numerous observations on medical practice, some wise and more clever, it is not in the end a book about medicine at all, but a book about the human condition. Illich finds the condition not so good, and I find the same to be true of his book.

According to Illich, one of the most destructive aspects of advanced industrial society is professionalization, which casts a small group of people, such as doctors, in an authoritarian, anti-human relation to the rest of the population. He believes that the relatively recent invention of so-called scientific medicine, with its concentration of healing power in a single monopolistic brotherhood, has dangerously altered the ways in which ordinary

ROGER STARR, who was until recently administrator of New York City's Housing and Development Administration, is currently Henry Luce Professor of Urban Values at New York University.

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people think about their own health. The extinction of such competitive curing methods as homeopathic medicine, faith healing, magic, herbalism, and exorcism has weakened man's ability to cure himself, to accept pain and suffering, and to sustain death with dignity. Indeed, Illich maintains that the scientific medical industry has made cures difficult, if not impossible, for all forms of human illness other than non-viral infectious diseases, and (as if this were not enough) that it has actually increased the threat of illness to man.

In support of his view, Illich invokes the notion of iatrogenesis, which is the standard medical term for diseases that result from the process of cure, and points out the forms iatrogenesis may take as a result of medical industrialization. There are first of all the iatrogenetic effects of hospital organization—the familiar story of the patient admitted for the setting of a broken leg who emerges months later painfully recuperating from hepatitis. Then there are the accidents and miscalculations that take place in consulting and operating rooms. Finally, there is the most dangerous iatrogenetic category of all, illness-by-definition. Illich argues that, by defining all sorts of ordinary vicissitudes of human existence as ailments to be cured, modern medical science has turned people into dangerous neurotics who have lost the mastery of the basic terms of human existence.

WHAT is one to make of this indictment? So far as the last of Illich's categories goes, it is so tenuous as to be virtually unprovable, though the burden of proof still rests on Illich. As for the first two, Illich has a point, and on the way to making it he adduces some telling examples of the cure-that-is-worse-than-the-disease. Still, it is difficult to understand why specific institutional abuses of the kind Illich cites could not be corrected by specific institutional means. For Illich, however, reform is not enough. Nothing less will do to redress the curse of modern iatrogenetic disease than a wholesale return to pre-industrial society.

Illich is unclear about what such a return would or would not entail. For example, he fervently denounces a recent change in Mexican law (he lives in Cuernavaca) which has made it impossible to purchase penicillin G without a prescription, citing the new prescription law as further evidence of the corrupting nature of the medical monopoly, in this case a conspiracy between the drug manufacturer and medical practitioner that requires the patient to pay a practitioner in order to obtain a product he is perfectly capable of using without outside help. In fact, however, the ordinary consumer is *not* qualified to dispense penicillin to himself, and its use without medical supervision might very well involve a high degree of risk. More important, in the course of this harangue Illich simply ignores the fact that the availability of penicillin G in Mexico is the direct result of the very industrialization he has been attacking, and that a pre-industrial health system of the kind he advocates would be unable to manufacture or distribute it—much less to have invented it—in the first place. Like other advocates of a return to some simple, handcrafted Golden Age, Illich wants to make the trip with a hidden cargo of technological goodies.

ILLICH expends considerable energy and ingenuity in the attempt to prove that the negative aspects of modern medicine are more important than its benefits—but never convincingly. Take, for example, what would seem to be one of modern medicine's most incontrovertible achievements—the extension of the average life span

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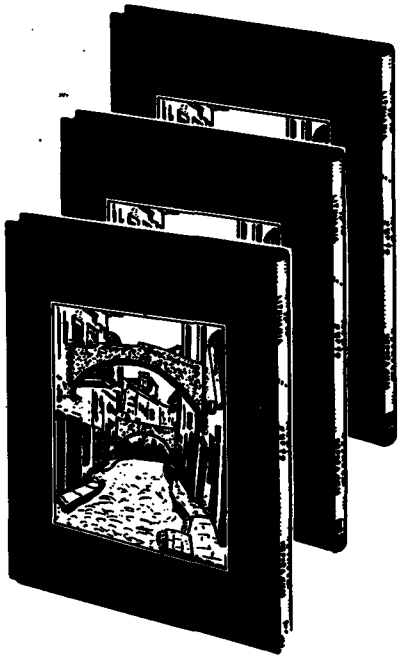

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over the past two hundred years to a point where it has about doubled. Since Illich is not prepared to argue that the extension of human life is a bad thing, he asserts instead that modern medicine has had very little to do with the lengthening of the life span, which he ascribes to better nutrition and better public health, and for which he praises engineers rather than physicians. He also claims that the lengthening trend is now over, and cites as evidence the huge sums of money being spent on diseases like cancer that continue to prove intractable to medical science, probably because they are rooted in environmental disturbances which are intrinsic to industrialized life.

Now even someone who was not raised, as I was, on *Microbe Hunters* would find it hard to agree with Illich that all those programs of immunization against bacterial and coccal disease, which have gone so far toward lengthening the human life span, reflect no credit on doctors, or that public-health measures could have been implemented without major contributions from the medical profession, or, for that matter, that participation by doctors in various reformist ventures has not played a significant part in reducing the incidence of those contagious diseases which are a direct result of poor social conditions, even though doctors may have been generally in the dark as to the real causes of the diseases which public cleanliness and better diet helped to eliminate. So far as Illich's predictions about the future go, there is no doubt that advances in such things as cancer therapy have been slow to the point of imperceptibility, but it is also true that many years elapsed between Schaudinn's discovery of the spirochete and Fleming's discovery of the penicillin which killed it. Even granting, moreover, that intractable diseases like cancer are in fact caused mainly by environmental factors, why should it be so much harder to change them than it was to change the environmental factors responsible for the spread of contagious diseases?

Illich is perhaps least convincing in his romanticization of mankind's

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pre-industrialized past, relying chiefly on evidence from ancient works of art to prove that the human condition in the past was characterized by a happier acceptance of pain and death than it is today. Some of the observations Illich makes in this connection are interesting, and even brilliant, but mainly they prove that it is easier to be uncritical about the past than about the present. He is very harsh, for example, about the widespread reliance on painkilling drugs today, charging them with responsibility for cheapening man's perception of his place in the divine order. But such reliance is in fact a very ancient habit. What is the qualitative difference between a Navajo taking peyote to kill his pain and a Brooklynite taking codeine to kill his? Having personally observed the reactions to pain of both simple pre-industrial people and post-technological American soldiers, I find it difficult to credit Illich's assertion that primitive cultures excel in inculcating some sort of "skill in the art of suffering" that is missing from our own.

FINALLY, the most curious thing about this bold, angry book is the blandness of Illich's actual proposals for an alternative medical order, particularly when compared with the fervor of his denunciation of the existing one. "The deprofessionalization of medicine" which he proposes does not, he assures the reader, "imply the proscription of technical language," does not call for "the exclusion of genuine competence," does not "oppose public scrutiny of malpractice," and does not mean "the abolition of modern medicine." What it does oppose is "mystification of the public," "public support of a medical guild," and discrimination by and on behalf of people whom individuals or communities appoint as their leaders. In short, after his lengthy catalogue of the offenses perpetrated by modern medicine against mankind, all Illich recommends is somewhat more community control over hospitals and doctors. Which leads one to suspect that he takes his own arguments far less seriously than he expects everyone else to.

The Will & Its Ways

LYING, DESPAIR, JEALOUSY, ENVY, SEX, SUICIDE, DRUGS, AND THE GOOD LIFE. By LESLIE H. FARBER. *Basic Books. 232 pp. $10.00.*

Reviewed by
WERNER J. DANNHAUSER

THE practice of psychotherapy seems to be in dreadful disarray. Cults proliferate, each of them helping some patients, harming others, but leaving most about where they were when they started —miserable. Claims and promises escalate, but not the gross national product of happiness. And if one turns from practice to theory, the situation is more depressing still. Classical Freudian psychoanalysis comes on as weary, its successors as worse. Some schools find their hope in chemicals; others lean toward mysticism. Mostly there is acrimony, with the only common ground appearing to be a predilection for mugging Freud. In some respects the old man had it coming to him, to be sure, but today he is being attacked primarily not for his weakness but for his strength: the brooding comprehensiveness of his vision and the unflinching resolve to be a healer in the face of gloom.

Leslie H. Farber, himself a practicing psychoanalyst, is the author of a previous and unjustly neglected work, *The Ways of the Will*, some chapters of which are reprinted in the present volume. Farber's own stance toward Freud is by no means uncritical. Thus, he finds Freud's studies of hysteria wanting, and Freud's approach to jealousy somewhat off target; he holds that psychoanalytic theory in general has neglected some of the most common and significant aspects of human behavior—next to nothing is known, for example, about the pervasive phenomenon of lying; and he has always fought the prevalent tendency of psychoanalysis toward reductionism, toward understanding the human in the light of the less than human.

WERNER J. DANNHAUSER *is professor of government at Cornell and the author of* Nietzsche's View of Socrates.

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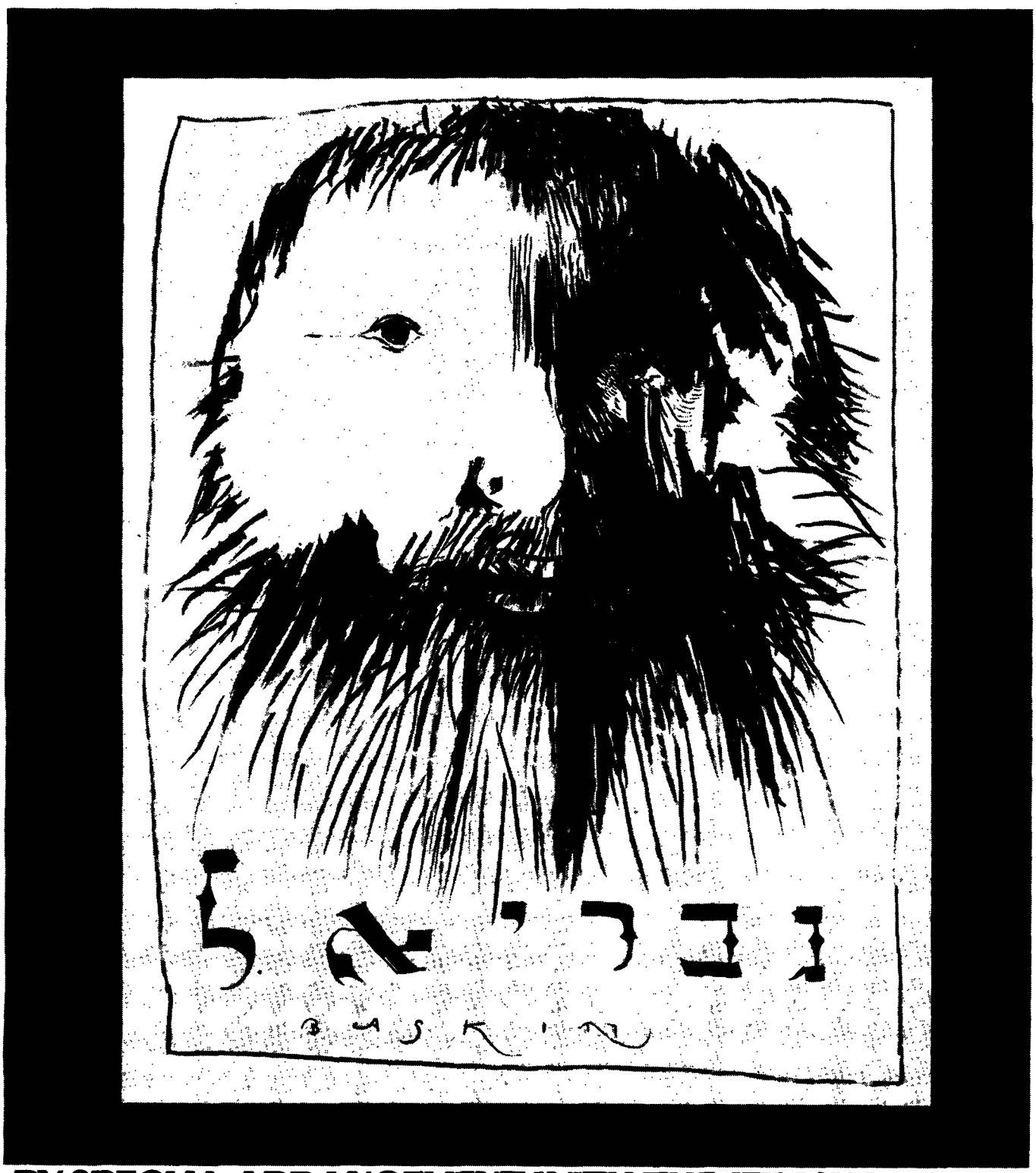

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But unlike so many of the attacks being made against Freud and Freudianism today, Farber's criticisms cannot be faulted, because they are forthright, uncondescending, and above all disinterested—perpetrated in the service of developing a more nearly adequate view of the human soul, a psychology of the will.

That psychology is as intriguing as it is difficult to summarize. Farber distrusts systematic thinking, and at times seems wary of theory itself. Instead, he chooses to couch his ideas in the form of elegant, polished essays of a high literary order on specific topics—the mordantly funny title conveys a sense of the book's range—and these ventures are as often as not so dazzling that their effect is to conceal his viewpoint as much as to reveal it. That viewpoint appears to go something like this: in seeking to understand man, modern psychology has failed to give the will its due, and for this negligence it has paid a fearful price. This is not only because the will is a kind of prime mover of men, but also because it has itself run amok of late. Farber characterizes our times as the "Age of the Disordered Will," and he contends that our propensity for "willing what cannot be willed"—a phrase that runs like a refrain through the book—is at the root of many of our troubles.

It follows that helping people means enabling them to deal with the megalomania of their wills, a controlling insight which in these essays Farber proceeds to apply as well as test in discussing a number of specific afflictions. For instance, he defines anxiety as "that range of distress which attends willing what cannot be willed"; hysteria as "a particular disorder of the will whose principal expression is willfulness"; and suicide as the ultimate, hideous desire of the will to master not only the way we live our life but also the way we die our death.

Nor does the disordered will confine its work to neurotics and psychotics. All of us, in Farber's view, tend to erect illusory bridges between our will and its objects, often by becoming addicted to one thing or another (not necessarily drugs). Seeking to dominate more and more, we enjoy less and less. Sex becomes less and less viable as the will to the perfect orgasm makes it more of a test than a pleasure. And our need to control makes us increasingly unable to enjoy the real benefits available to us: good talk, the consolations of family life, and the saving dignity of things like work and friendship.

How has it come to this? Farber, a serious thinker, knows that the questions posed by psychology point beyond psychology; he realizes the futility of psychiatry's efforts, as he puts it, "to rid itself of metaphysical concern." His own philosophical position is obviously influenced—too much at times, in my opinion—by existentialism, though his tough-minded common sense saves him from that movement's incurable propensity for equating the true with the terrible. Farber has learned a great deal from Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, and from Buber. He knows that the reputed death of God and the triumphs of modern technology have freed the will from its more obvious fetters, but he also knows that human sovereignty has made men neither happy nor good. His search is for a view both true and consoling of a universe in which human beings can lead a good life. Recognizing our common human plight, and rejecting all facile answers, he confronts even the grimmest aspects of life in order, as he says, "to look both at and through the darkness"; for this he deserves great credit.

If Farber's thought almost always commands admiration, it is necessary to add that it does not always command assent, and is not immune from criticism. For one thing, I wish Farber had taken greater pains to define exactly what he means by the will—considering that it is, so to speak, the main character in the book. Though its disorders are made abundantly clear, the will itself remains a rather murky idea. What exactly is it? What is its relation to reason? At one point Farber writes of it as being usually the adversary of reason, but is rational willing all that unusual? And what are the limits of the will? Even if one agrees with Farber about the dangers of trying to will what cannot be willed, how are the necessary distinctions to be made? Courage and heroism, for example, often seem to consist precisely in willing—and achieving—what is allegedly impossible of accomplishment. One wonders what Farber would answer to the charge that in his strictures against willing-what-cannot-be-willed he may be counseling a kind of relaxation that is indistinguishable from sloth.

Finally, the book is subject to a more tenuous kind of criticism. Some of the essays offer genuine ground for argument; thus, I would contend that the essay on suicide is marred by a failure fully to consider that taking one's life may under certain circumstances partake of the noble. Others, however, seem to permit of no other evaluation or response than that of checking them against one's own feeling, which does not always accord with Farber's. Though most of the essays—especially those on the relations between men and women—entail continuous shocks of recognition, at times what Farber says simply fails to convince subjectively. Is it really easier to will lust than love, for example? My own experience has shown more nearly the opposite.

But it is not the least of the book's virtues that it prompts evaluation through introspection and self-examination, and in this regard the reader can do no better than to follow the author's example. Graced by what Goethe called "courtesy of the heart," Farber does not urge honesty on the reader until he has bared his own foibles, and he is never quite so harsh in judging others as he is in judging himself. As a healer, Farber is moral precisely because he does not moralize, showing us instead that our vices do not make us glamorous or interesting but only diminish us, just as insanity is almost never divine madness and almost always pure wretchedness. Indeed, in this book Farber praises sanity so sanely that he succeeds in giving it back its good name, and, especially these days, that is no mean achievement.

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The Effects of Ice on Scotch

How fast a drink of Scotch whisky over rocks loses its flavor depends on the proof of the Scotch and the richness of its blend. These two factors are optimized for "on the rocks" Scotch drinkers in 90-Proof Famous Grouse, a venerable old brand from Scotland only recently introduced to America.

by Allen Mac Kenzie

In countries where Scotch has been consumed for centuries, ice and whisky rarely mingle. But on this side of the Atlantic, the picture is quite different. While a small percentage of American Scotch drinkers take it neat, better than 35% drink it "on the rocks." The rest of us add varying amounts of water, club soda, etcetera. And ice. Always plenty of ice —the great American drink requisite.

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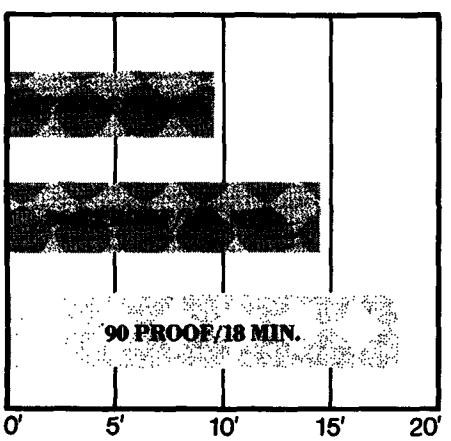

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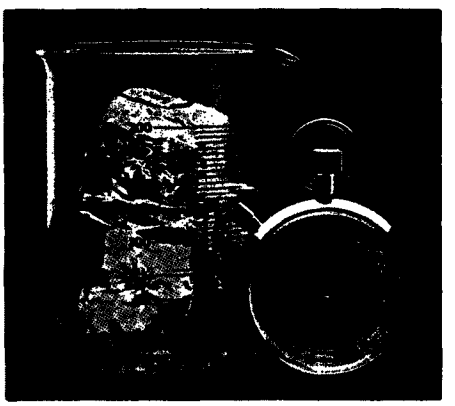

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As you might expect, the proof falls rapidly during the first few minutes of cooling, but more slowly after the whisky is chilled. The diagram shows how long it takes Scotches of three different proofs to reach 45 proof when poured over ice. If proof is considered to be a measure of freshness, 90-Proof *Famous Grouse* has a 3½ minute advantage over 86.8-Proof Scotch after 18 minutes on the rocks. (Because it takes 3½ minutes longer to reach 45 proof.) Its advantage over 80-Proof Scotch is 8½ minutes.

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"Gie me a spark o' Nature's fire,
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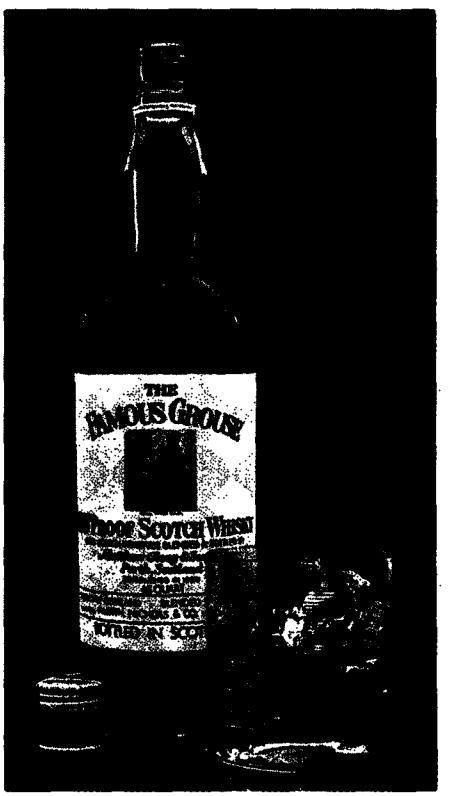

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